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RECOMMENDATIONS.

HAVING examined the manuscript of a work by Rev. Whitman Peck, exhibiting the principal topics of Christian theology in a systematic arrangement, and designed especially for the training of intelligent young people in the knowledge of religious truth,—I am able to say that the author seems to have done his work well, and I trust it will have the extensive circulation which it deserves.

The study of Christian doctrine is, in these days, too much neglected among those who ought to be and are not very intelligent Christians. Pastors, in city and country, may well use this compend as a text-book for parish classes of young people. They may thus train up for themselves intelligent hearers, and may find that a revived attention to Christian doctrine in the parish leads to a true and lasting revival of religion.

LEONARD BACON, D.D.,
Prof. Theol. Sem., New Haven.

Many persons, who will never possess nor read an elaborate theological treatise, desire to know, and certainly *ought* to know, what are the leading doctrines of the Christian system, and the grounds on which they rest. For this purpose they need more than a catechism, and less than a *body* of divinity. They need a concise, clear, simple, but accurate summary of Christian doctrine. This want is well supplied by the "Manual of Christian Faith," prepared by Rev. Whitman Peck. The work is written with care and good judgment, and is well adapted to the use for which it is designed. A list of questions is appended to it, and it may be used with convenience and profit as a text-book in Bible classes, Sabbath Schools and families.

D. B. COE, D.D.,
Sec. A. H. Miss. Soc.

Peck

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Recommendations.

I have carefully read the "Manual of the Christian Faith," by Rev. W. Peck, and have done so with great and increasing pleasure. He has done a good work; and I wish that the book may have a wide circulation. There is, throughout the whole, such a broad, hearty, unequivocal adherence to the old New England, and Scriptural theology, as greatly delights me. I am especially pleased to see that it is so sound and unequivocal on certain doctrines which were dear to all the old generations of New England Christians, but which some of later years have been disposed to hold lightly, to call in question, or wholly to reject.

EDWIN HALL, D.D.,
Prof. Theology, Auburn Theol. Sem., N. Y.

I have looked over the MSS. of Rev. Mr. Peck's "Manual of the Christian Faith." It appears to be evangelical in thought and spirit, and is written in an easy and lucid style. It is designed as a manual for the study of religious truths in families, Sunday Schools, and Bible classes, and seems to be well adapted to that use.

SAMUEL HARRIS, D.D.,
Prof. Theol. Sem., New Haven.

I fully concur in the statements of Drs. Hall and Harris respecting Mr. Peck's Manual, and heartily commend it to the churches.

EDWIN F. HATFIELD, D.D.,
Stated Clerk of Gen. Assembly.

The "Manual of the Christian Faith," by Rev. Whitman Peck, a considerable part of which I have read in manuscript, appears to me a truly successful popular exhibition of the leading truths of revelation. Avoiding all extreme and speculative views, he has stated the doctrines of the Scriptures, as commonly held by our churches, and the grounds on which they are sustained, in a clear, comprehensive and judicious manner. His work would be studied, I think, with great satisfaction and profit by those who desire to obtain a better knowledge of the doctrinal teachings of the Bible.

GEORGE E. DAY, D.D.,
Prof. Theol. Sem., New Haven.

Recommendations.

The conception, design, and plan of this work I cordially commend. Its object is most important. Without vouching for every sentiment, or endorsing every expression, I would gladly help to circulate the book.

S. B. S. BISSELL, *Norwalk, Ct.*

Not only the young, but also older persons, will find this "Manual" a very convenient and valuable book to peruse and study. There is need of such a book, and in this time of abounding error it is especially desirable that it should have a wide circulation and perusal.

REV. DAVID PECK, *Sunderland, Mass.*

Such a book cannot but be useful, and may be commended to Christian parents and teachers. As it is free from a controversial spirit, it will be serviceable to persons of all denominations. The author's purpose is an excellent one, and we are glad that he has so successfully carried it out.—*New Englander.*

That there is deplorable ignorance concerning the great and yet simple truths of Christianity must be admitted. It is equally certain that the masses in our churches will never read our elaborate works on theology. To furnish a book adapted to this need, and in such a form as to secure general reading, would be a rich blessing to the church and the world; with this in view, the work before us has been given to the public. It is clear, fair, brief, yet covering most points in our Christian scheme, and is worthy a place in every Christian family.—*Cong. Quarterly.*

This "Manual" contains all the fundamental and leading truths of religion. These are presented in accord with sound New England theology, and in a simple and perspicuous style. It is just such a book as is needed in families, and those who study it will know relative to the most important of all subjects, more than many persons generally accounted intelligent Christians do know.—*Religious Herald.*



MANUAL
OF
THE CHRISTIAN FAITH:

OR
RELIGIOUS TRUTHS GENERALLY BELIEVED BY
EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS.

DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE INSTRUCTION OF THE
YOUNG IN FAMILIES, SABBATH
SCHOOLS, ETC.

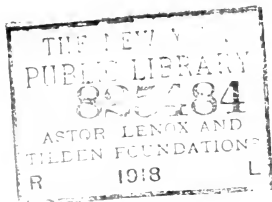
By REV. WHITMAN PECK, A. M.

“The Faith once delivered to the Saints.”—JUDE iii.

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PREFACE.

THIS VOLUME has been prepared to supply what the author has long felt to be a great want. The question has often arisen in his mind, Why should the youth growing up to maturity in families professing Christianity, study Algebra, History, Philosophy, Astronomy, and other sciences, and not study *Theology*? Why should this study be neglected as least important and suitable only for ministers? It would be inexpedient, doubtless, to have religious truths taught in public schools except as they are taught in the Bible, and many would exclude even the Word of God; but why should they not be taught more in families, in Sabbath-schools and Bible classes, and even in private schools? What study is more important? What study is better fitted to discipline the mind, to elevate the thoughts, to enlarge the heart, and to fit one for the responsibilities of life, even if eternity be left out of view, and especially if life is the beginning of an endless existence?

But how can most young persons acquire such a knowledge of religious truths as should seem desir-

able? The Bible, indeed, teaches such truths, and should be chiefly studied, but they need to know that it *is* the Word of God and *what* it teaches. Such knowledge is usually very imperfect, and can be more easily acquired by learning what others have already learned, provided each one thinks and reasons for himself, and carefully distinguishes truth from error. Yet it can scarcely be expected that many in these days will study or even read such systems of Theology as are chiefly designed for ministers, composing several volumes, or, at least, a large volume. Therefore the author has been led to prepare a small volume designed to teach the essential and more important truths of religion, so that they can be more easily learned. He supposes that the views presented are much the same that all evangelical Christians believe, except in respect to Election and Perseverance, Baptism and Church Government.

Religious truths, though most important, are least known. Many professing Christians scarcely know what they profess, and could not give any sufficient reasons for their belief. Most persons believe what they have been taught. In many cases this may be sufficient to guide them safely through life and secure their salvation; but they are often carried about by every wind of doctrine, and the truth itself

is apt to be set at naught amidst scenes of wordliness, gaiety, and dissipation, especially if they are beset with sceptical influences and exposed to the snares of infidelity. How often, too, when youth trained in Christian families begin to think and reason for themselves, does their faith waver so that it is a long time before it is settled if it be not overthrown. The foundation of true faith is sure enough, but few are taught to build on it, and an evil heart of unbelief leads many astray, so that they are never saved. Let youth be taught the essential and leading truths of religion, and learn to give some satisfactory reasons for what they believe, then they will be more apt to believe the truth, and as they advance in life their faith will increase, and whatever tends to shake it will only render it more steadfast and immoveable. There are often difficulties in explaining the simplest truths, and objections to them that no one can answer; yet an honest, candid, and earnest inquirer will not be led far astray whoever may attempt to lead him, but let him be *earnest, and sincerely pray to be taught by the Spirit of God.*

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MANUAL OF CHRISTIAN FAITH,

OR

THEOLOGY.

THEOLOGY is the science of God. As other sciences teach systems of truths respecting the heavenly bodies, the earth, the human body and mind, animals, plants, and minerals, so *Theology* teaches such truths respecting God as he has himself revealed to men, or they have discovered by reason.

The *importance* of Theology should seem to be very great, since it lies at the foundation of religion. If there is any need of religion, and it makes any difference whether a true or false religion prevails, the truths of Theology need to be known and believed.

GOD.

Some idea of *God* has prevailed among men everywhere and in all ages. The simplest is that of an uncreated and invisible Being of supreme power and superior wisdom.

The *credibility* of any truths respecting God depends on the reasons for believing compared with the reasons for rejecting them. Mathematical proof should not be expected, nor should absolute certainty be required. The stronger reasons are sufficient for believing or rejecting any truth, provided all the rea-

sons that we can discover have been duly and candidly considered. We often believe what it is possible to doubt, and some disbelieve, and there is no reason why we should require stronger evidences of religious truths than of others. The doubts, too, which arise on this subject can be traced to ignorance or evil prejudices rather than the want of sufficient evidences. These are *most abundant, clear, and overwhelming.*

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

The *existence* of God should be inferred partly from *the idea of such a Being so universally prevalent.* Such an idea, however imperfect or erroneous it may be, must have been derived from a reality. All ideas are derived from realities. We cannot think without something to suggest thought. Even imaginary and false ideas are founded on truth. We could not conceive of a fictitious man if there were no real men. So there could be no false ideas of God or false gods if there were no true God.

The existence of God should also be inferred from *its general belief.* Very few, comparatively, have denied it, and it is doubtful whether any who have reflected much on the subject have been free from the conviction that there is an invisible Being of supreme power and superior wisdom. It is true that what is generally believed may be false, but not after long inquiry and a full discussion. Until, therefore, it can be plainly proved that there is no God, it is more reasonable to adopt the prevailing opinion that there is one.

But the most satisfactory reasons for believing in the existence of God are the manifold and multiplied evidences derived from *our own existence and that of all things*. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood from the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." "Every house is builded by some man, but He that built all things is God." "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." Apart from the authority of these passages of Scripture as the inspired Word of God, they appeal to our reason and carry conviction to most minds.

We might, perhaps, as reasonably conclude that matter in some form has always existed uncreated, as that God has, if this would account for all things as they are, but it would not. It would not account for anything that has had a beginning or that displays intelligence and design. Though it may be thought that matter is naturally active, undergoing changes and assuming new forms, so that things as they now exist are only the developments of original matter according to natural laws, and that even men may have descended from apes, it is plainly not the nature of matter to *think, to devise and execute plans, or to adapt means to ends*, not even as we are capable of doing, much less as has been done in the creation and preservation of the heavens and the

earth, and especially of such intelligent and moral beings as we are.

Whatever powers, therefore, properly belong to matter, and by whatever natural laws it is governed, wherever there are plain indications of intelligence and design, wherever there is a wise and skillful adaptation of means to ends, and good and glorious results are being accomplished, there are clear and satisfactory proofs of the existence of *mind* distinct from and superior to matter; and wherever infinite knowledge, wisdom, and skill are displayed, there are proofs of the existence of an *infinite mind*, a *Supreme Being*, *God*. Such proofs we find in ourselves and everything around us. They are often ascribed to Nature as her works, but if they are it is only because God is the Author of Nature and its laws.

We, so fearfully and wonderfully made, are ourselves living witnesses of God's existence. The simplest lesson that a child can learn is, that God made him. His ideas respecting the Creator may be the faintest possible (and even men's most exalted conceptions of Him are only faint), yet he easily comprehends that there must be some Being who made him and all things.

If we should see one of the finest statues that art has produced, we should not doubt that its admirable proportions and surpassing beauty were first conceived, and then sculptured from marble by some skillful artist. But a human artist can only imperfectly imitate the Divine Artist. If he possessed the requisite power and skill, he would give to a

statue life and motion, inspire it with thoughts, and make it capable of knowing, loving, and serving him. Surely, then, we were not born by chance, we were not made without a Maker. To suppose that we were is absurd; to believe it is most unreasonable, if, indeed, it is possible.

The forms of our bodies, and the adaptation of their various organs to their several uses, display the wisdom and power of the Creator far more than the finest works of art display the genius and skill of men. The eye adapted for sight, the ear for hearing, the nose for smelling, the tongue for speaking, the hands for any kind of work, the feet for walking or running, the lungs for breathing, the stomach for digesting food, the heart, arteries, and veins, for the circulation of the blood, the blood itself to nourish the body, the nerves for sensation and activity—the whole body fashioned, preserved, and grown to its present stature, with its several organs, affords striking proof of the existence of a Being powerful, wise, and skillful enough to create and preserve us. Or if we could conceive of the creation of the body without a Creator, how could it possess life and action without any life-giving and life-preserving power?

Such proofs are greatly multiplied when the several parts of the body are minutely examined. The eye, for example, not only required the power and wisdom of God to form it and adapt it for sight, but each part required the same. First the pupil expands or contracts just enough to admit sufficient light, and no more; then the crystalline lens has just the shape

needed to form an image on the retina, where also the optic nerve is spread out to receive and convey the sensation of sight to the brain. Whenever there is the slightest imperfection or disease in any one of the several parts of the eye, either partial or total blindness ensues. It was long before men acquired sufficient knowledge and skill to invent the telescope, and long after its first invention before it was improved and perfected as it has been. If, then, the telescope affords proof of men's knowledge and skill, it should seem that the eye affords multiplied proofs of the knowledge and wisdom of God. So, also, all the members and organs of the body, when minutely examined, afford multiplied proofs of His existence.

Our minds, too, must have originated from a Divine mind. An intelligent and moral Being only could create other intelligent and moral beings. Men, with all their wisdom and skill, cannot invent thinking and reasoning-machines. Much less could such minds as ours exist by chance. Nothing can be more absurd than the idea that we are capable of thinking and reasoning on various subjects, of feeling love or hatred, joy or sorrow, of distinguishing right from wrong, and of feeling moral obligations, without the knowledge or will of an intelligent Creator.

There are, also, *clear and manifold proofs of God's existence every where around us.* The view of any landscape, including hills, mountains, valleys, plains, lakes, and rivers, whether clothed in the freshness and beauty of spring, abounding in the fruits of summer and autumn, or covered with snow and ice in

winter, naturally suggests the idea of God. The sea, the vast and surging ocean, cataracts, lightning and thunder, the clouds and sky, sunshine and storms, all bear witness of Him. So, also, do beasts, birds, fish, and every living creature.

Here, again, the proofs are multiplied more and more as we consider the great variety of creatures and things that exist, and minutely examine each one. There are multitudes of insects so small that they escape notice, yet the microscope reveals the same perfection of structure and beauty in them that is seen elsewhere in the natural world.

Other proofs of God's existence are seen in the heavens. Even heathen worshipers of the sun and moon should seem more rational than those who say in their hearts, there is no God. Of course, these heavenly orbs have no claim on our worship. We should not love and adore them. But they plainly teach us that there is a Being whom we should worship. Only an intelligent Supreme Being could set the earth in motion and so regulate its movements around the sun and on its own axis, that there should be days and nights, seasons and years, more uniform and exact than any chronometer ever invented. Does it require knowledge and skill to measure time, and none to produce it? Only an intelligent Being, also, could so constitute the sun that its light and heat, coming to the earth from a distance of more than ninety million miles, should impart life, comfort, and beauty to every clime.

Nor is it only one sun with its retinue of primary

and secondary planets that thus declares the glory of God. A thousand such suns can be seen at night shining as stars in the firmament above us, and with telescopes millions—yes, many billions more. Besides, no astronomer has yet reached with telescopic vision the farthest limits of the universe, or imagined that it will ever be reached.

What, then, shall we conclude respecting the existence of God? Are there no proofs that should satisfy us? Have we been forced to believe that there is no God? Or have we not rather been prompted to express the conviction—

“ There is an unseen Power around
Existing in the silent air,
Where treadeth man, where space is found,
Unheard, unknown, that Power is there.”

It is a source of great *satisfaction* to many to be assured that there is a God, the Creator and Preserver of all things infinitely superior to themselves and all created beings. It is a source of great *comfort* to them to believe that God is their Heavenly Father, that He cares for them and provides for their comfort and welfare with infinite wisdom and goodness. It is a source of great *peace* to them, that though they are sinners, God is gracious, compassionate, and long-suffering towards them; that God, in Christ, is able and willing to save them; and that God, the Holy Spirit, is their Teacher, Guide, and Sanctifier. It is a source of great *consolation* to them in trouble, in adversity, in doubt, in perplexity,

in poverty, in trials, in affliction, in suffering, in sorrow, in sickness, and in death, that God orders and controls all events and all things, so that even the hairs of their heads are all numbered, and all things work together for good to them that love Him. It is a source of great *joy* to them that God is with them at all times, knows all their wants, hears their prayers, diffuses happiness to innumerable holy beings, and will, finally, welcome them, penitent and believing, into His presence, where is fullness of joy, and at His right hand, where are pleasures for evermore. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God, but we should say; The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation.

THE BIBLE THE WORD OF GOD.

SINCE, as has been proved, there is a God, we shall next inquire, Whether the Bible is, as it claims to be, the *Word of God*? This is important, for the knowledge of God and religious truths is derived chiefly from the Bible. Though what it teaches is consistent with reason, and many of its truths may be satisfactorily proved by reason alone enlightened as it has been by the Holy Scriptures, reason without the Bible has not imparted to men a true knowledge of God. Even the existence of the true God has not been known, and many false gods have been worshiped, except where the Bible has been circulated.

INSPIRATION.

The authority of the Bible as the Word of God depends on its *inspiration*. This denotes a special influence exerted by God on the writers of the Old and New Testaments, so that what they wrote should be regarded as written or spoken by Himself, and therefore certainly true, not to be disputed or doubted.

There is no reason, indeed, why the Bible should not be believed apart from its inspiration. We do not consider history and the sciences false because they are not inspired; no more should we disbelieve the Bible if we should doubt its inspiration, though believing it is plainly inconsistent with any such

doubt. If not inspired, still no history, no code of laws, no poem, no precepts of morality and virtue, no religious creed ever published, merits so much the attention and admiration of men. Every page bears the impress of truth. Not a fact, not a declaration, not a sentiment, not a doctrine it contains, has ever been disproved. If not inspired, it should seem that those who wrote it must have learned by reason, or perhaps by intuition, truths far above the reach of common minds. It is still the Bible. But its *authority* as the Word of God depends, as has been remarked, on its inspiration.

Just in *what respects and how* the Bible was inspired, we need not inquire. The fact is all that we need to know. This, too, refers to the original Scriptures rather than any copy or translation differing from them, though it is not known that there is any essential difference. It refers, also, to the whole Bible, and not merely such parts of it as may seem to any one to have been inspired.

That the Bible is inspired should be believed for such reasons as the following:

A more perfect knowledge of God and religious truths than men have ever had without the Bible was *desirable*. It was *possible* for God to impart such knowledge. A regard for his own glory and the good of men would *dispose* him to impart it. There are, also, sufficient *evidences* that the Bible is his inspired Word. These evidences are of two kinds, *Internal* and *External*. The internal evidences are such as are derived from the Bible itself.

The external evidences are such as are derived from History, Miracles, and Prophecies.

INTERNAL EVIDENCES.

The Bible could not have been written without inspiration. As a true system of astronomy, or any other science, could not be written by any one ignorant of the facts and principles on which it is founded, so the Bible could not have been written by uninspired men, who could not have known or conceived of such facts and truths as it reveals. Especially will this be evident to those who are best acquainted with it, and feel most its influence. They could as easily believe that there could be the light of day without sunshine, as the light of the Gospel without inspiration.

The knowledge of the only true God has been derived only from the Bible. Some of the wisest men that ever lived, except where the Bible has been taught, lived in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Yet in all these countries idolatry and superstition prevailed. Not even the most enlightened minds had any conceptions of God as he is, an almighty, omnipresent, and omniscient Spirit, perfectly holy, just, and good. No human mind unenlightened from above, ever conceived of the sublime ideas: "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." "With whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning." "Behold the heavens and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy

presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." "The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of men." "God is light." "God is love." "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." "Just and true are Thy ways, O Thou King of Saints." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Such exalted conceptions of God are more than the human mind can grasp, though so plainly revealed, and God only could have thus revealed Himself to men.

The *plan of salvation through Christ*, as taught in the Bible, could not have been conceived without inspiration. Though it did not require a revelation from God to teach that all have sinned, the nature of sin and its guilt in the sight of God would never have been known without it. Especially would it have been impossible to know that there is salvation for sinners, or such salvation as is offered in the Gospel. The idea that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, or that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, so incredible to many even now, is above human thought, above reason, and could be conceived only by inspiration.

So, also, *justification by faith* could not have been first taught by uninspired men. If we think how the heathen have vainly endeavored to appease the

anger of their false deities by costly sacrifices and self-inflicted tortures, and how prone all, even in Christian countries, are to rely on their own good works for salvation, we shall have reason to conclude that the idea of justification by faith is not of human origin. At the same time, if we consider how faith works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world, how it imparts peace and joy to those who would otherwise be oppressed with a sense of their sinfulness and guilt, and how it cheers and animates the soul in view of death and eternity, we shall be apt to think that its origin is divine. God only could deliver to sinful men the message, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

What the Bible teaches respecting *regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit* is another proof of its inspiration. Men easily understand, indeed, that some change is necessary to fit them for heaven; but they either believe that it can be easily effected by their own efforts whenever they purpose to live a better life, or sometimes despair of ever being delivered from their evil propensities and wicked passions. The idea of being born again, being born of the Spirit, being renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, or the idea that there is any Holy Spirit, never entered their minds till it came by inspiration. Even since they have been taught such truths, the wisest of them are ever asking, as Nicodemus did, How can these things be? till they learn them by experience. Then they are convinced, if not before, that the Bible is the Word of God, and

the longer they live by faith, or the richer their experience is, the more they feel that they have been *taught of God*.

The *resurrection of the body*, the *final judgment*, and the *future state of the righteous and the wicked*, as taught in the Bible, afford additional proof of its inspiration. Whatever reason alone might lead us to conjecture respecting a future state of existence, it would never have suggested the idea of the resurrection. The body after death molders into dust, and though science teaches that none of its particles are ever lost, it represents them as locked up in the dark sepulchre, sunk in the ocean, scattered by the winds, or transformed into vegetables, trees, flowers, and animals. That the dead will rise from their graves would seem impossible, if not plainly taught by God himself, with whom all things are possible. So, also, though we might have had anticipations of happiness, and forebodings of evil beyond the grave, only one having authority could have depicted, as Christ did (Math. xxv. 31), the final judgment, with the awards of the righteous and the wicked. Who has ever conceived of and described such a scene without deriving his ideas from the Bible? Could it have been anticipated without a revelation from God?

The *spirit* which the Bible exhibits and enjoins also proves its inspiration. Instead of a selfish, proud, and worldly spirit, or a hateful and vile spirit, such as is apt to be exhibited among men, or such as heathen deities are represented as exhibiting, it is

lovely, pure, kind, benevolent, and heavenly. If it sometimes assumes the aspect of severity, it is only in opposition to sin, and even towards sinners it is a spirit of compassion and forgiveness. How unlike the spirit which has filled the world with violence and bloodshed, oppression, and cruelty! How much, too, of the spirit exhibited by virtuous and good men has been derived from the influence which the Bible has exerted upon them?

The Bible proclaims peace on earth, good will to men. It offers forgiveness to the penitent. It promises rest to the weary and heavy laden. It imparts consolation to the afflicted. Its precepts are: Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. We shall look in vain for the exhibition of such a spirit except where the influence of the Bible is felt. We shall search in vain for such pure precepts in the writings of men who have not been familiar with the Word of God. Hence it should seem that the Bible must have been inspired by the same Spirit that produces the fruit of love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance.

Another proof of the inspiration of the Bible is, that *it furnishes the only perfect standard of morality and virtue.* Some, indeed, regard it as too strict, and as requiring too much, and think it would be unreasonable to expect men to conform to it as their rule of life; yet they must acknowledge that it is a perfect rule, that whatever it requires is right, and

whatever it forbids is wrong. Human standards are various, and all of them imperfect. One justifies what another condemns. Especially are men apt to justify in themselves what they would condemn in others. They judge, too, by the outward life, and are satisfied with an outward conformity to their own standards of duty. But the Bible connects the heart with the life, the intention and motive with the conduct, love with obedience. It teaches, "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Thus its standard of perfection is much higher than uninspired men would have conceived. It respects, too, all that men ever think, say, or do, and all classes of men, high and low, rich and poor. Such a rule of life never originated among men as, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and, "As ye would that men should do to you do ye, also, to them."

Again, the *religion* of the Bible proves its inspiration; not, indeed, any religion professedly derived from it, nor merely such as it requires, but that which it really cherishes among those who read it attentively, and sincerely believe it to be the Word of God. No other religion makes men essentially better. The worship of idols, and prayers offered to the false prophet, or pilgrimages to his temple, do not fit men for heaven, or even make them better citizens. But the religion of the Bible effects an essential change in the character. It inspires love

to God and delight in his service. It makes sinners penitent, and leads them to forsake their sins. It begets a spirit of prayer. It withdraws the affections from the world, and sets them on things above. It incites earnestness and zeal in doing good, especially in saving others from sin and misery. It purifies the heart, and improves the outward life. There are numerous examples of its renewing and sanctifying influence in every Christian community. Such a religion was never devised by men. It is not of the earth.

It is, also, an evidence of the inspiration of the Bible that *it is adapted to the spiritual wants of men*. The earth brings forth fruit abundantly to satisfy their bodily wants. Science, history, poetry, and the arts, contribute largely to their intellectual enjoyment. But they have higher wants than these. At times, especially, they long for something better, and aspire to something higher. As dependent beings they need to be assured that they are kindly protected and cared for; as sinners they need forgiveness and sanctification; weary and heavy laden they need rest; in affliction they need comfort; in sorrow they need consolation; in sickness and distress they need sympathy; in view of death and eternity they need the hope of immortality and everlasting happiness. Till these wants are satisfied, there is an aching void in their souls. The Bible only tells them how it can be filled. God will be their Protector and Friend if they trust in Him. Christ offers them forgiveness, and promises to send

the Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify them, and thus make them heirs to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

The last internal evidence of the inspiration of the Bible which will be considered is, that *it reveals the only worthy end of human existence*, to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Apart from this the existence of intelligent beings could scarcely be a blessing. Surely earthly pursuits and pleasures, accompanied with so much sin, suffering, and sorrow, are not suited to the capacities of the human soul. Yet if the Bible is not inspired, we are sure of nothing beyond the present life. Everything pertaining to a future existence is dark and gloomy. Reason gives us no light. It only leads into thicker darkness. The best that we can do is to shut our eyes, and not see whither we are leaping. But with the Bible to inspire the hope of salvation from all sin and misery, and of dwelling forever with the redeemed in heaven, we can cheerfully bear the ills of life, and triumph over death. Believing that God will be faithful to his word, we can conceive of no greater good than to glorify and enjoy Him forever.

Taking the Bible, then, and reflecting on what it teaches respecting God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the salvation of men, and the future state; comparing its spirit and precepts with those of the wisest and best men who have not felt its influence; contrasting its religion with any other; and finding in it what can be found nowhere else, the way of peace, leading to the full enjoyment of God for

ever and ever, we conclude, even before considering the external evidences, that it is not of men. Uninspired men could not have written it. If this had been possible, bad men would not have been disposed to write so much to condemn themselves, what also bad men naturally hate; and good men would not have used such deception as to represent God as saying what they knew was false. The Bible, therefore, is the Word of God. Whatever it teaches, thus saith the Lord.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCES.

HISTORY.—No history is more certainly true than that contained in the Bible, and, being true, it proves the inspiration of all that the Bible reveals.

Biblical history, apart from its inspiration, has the same kind of evidences of its truth that any other history has. We believe other histories which the best judges pronounce true, especially if we know that they carefully examined and were fully satisfied with the evidences of their authenticity. The most that we require is to be assured that the authors themselves could not have been deceived or mistaken, and faithfully represented the facts as they occurred. On such testimony we believe what history teaches respecting Washington as the father of our country. It is reasonable, therefore, that on such testimony we should believe what the Bible teaches respecting Christ as the Saviour of mankind, and other facts which it narrates.

The best judges, after a thorough examination of

the evidences, have generally believed the Bible. Among them have been the best and most learned men, such as Pascal, Newton, Brewster, and Cuvier, besides theologians in other countries, and in our own, nearly all the professors of science and literature. The evidences as given by Lardner, Horne, and Paley, or Alexander, McIlvaine, and Hopkins, are abundant and overwhelming. Even those who doubt the inspiration of the Bible generally admit the truth of its history.

The writers of the Bible could not have been deceived or mistaken. Either they were the most artful impostors ever known, or what they wrote is true. They did not write what they had learned through traditions extending back many generations, but what they had themselves seen and heard, at least enough to know that it was true or false. The writers must have been the persons named; for during the life-time of some of them, other writers, both Christian and heathen, referred to Christian churches as then existing, and such churches have always been composed of believers of the Gospel, as preached by the Apostles and taught in their writings now contained in the New Testament. Numerous such references prove, as clearly as history proves anything, that the facts related in the New Testament were sincerely believed by the apostles and a great many others at the time they are said to have occurred. The facts, too, are of such a nature that they could not have been believed if they were not true. False statements, indeed, are often believed,

but not such as are referred to. The principal of these facts are the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Any one who believes these will readily believe the rest. A fact so improbable as the resurrection of Christ after He had been crucified, could not have been believed if it had not been true. Could any one of us declare that we had seen a man put to death, and had afterwards seen the same man alive, and not know whether it was true or false? Or could any persons be so deluded that they would believe such a statement? No more could the apostles have been deceived, or have deceived others.

The apostles, moreover, and others confirmed their sincerity by their earnestness and zeal in the face of opposition, persecution, and death. There have been many false prophets and teachers, indeed, who, for the sake of distinction and gain, have pretended that they were commissioned by God to teach some new truths. But it is apt to quench the zeal of impostors to find that they are exposing themselves to popular scorn and hatred. It requires real sincerity, and a deep conviction of truth and right, to nerve even fanatics to face persecution and meet death. A person may think it heroic to die for the truth, but not to die in confirmation of a *lie*. Therefore, the apostles and many early Christians have furnished the best possible evidence not only of their own sincerity, but also of the truth of the Gospel.

The death and resurrection of Christ are, also, confirmed by the Lord's Supper, and the observance of

the Christian Sabbath instead of the Jewish, just as fully as the Declaration of Independence is confirmed by every Fourth of July celebration. Would there have been such an annual celebration without any Declaration of Independence? If not, would there have been such institutions as the Lord's Supper to commemorate the death of Christ, and the Christian Sabbath to commemorate his resurrection, if it is not true that he was crucified and rose again?

The resurrection of Christ being thus clearly proved, it follows that the other miracles recorded in the New Testament were certainly performed, though this may be proved independently of his resurrection. Believing this, we need no further proof that during His ministry He healed the sick, cast out devils, restored sight to the blind, raised the dead to life, and performed various other miracles recorded in the New Testament.

Miracles.—The power of working miracles must belong only to God; nor would He confer it on any one to introduce a false religion, or even a religion mixed with errors. We know, said Nicodemus, that Thou art a Teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest except God be with him. Therefore, what Christ taught Himself, or by His apostles working miracles in His name, has the authority of God, and is His inspired Word. This proves the inspiration of the New Testament, which also confirms what the Jews have always believed, that the writings of Moses and the prophets, with the Psalms, are the law of God.

Prophecy.—Though the evidences already considered are conclusive, there is another class of external evidences that should not be passed over, such as are furnished by the fulfillment of prophecies. There are various predictions in the Bible of events long before they transpired, such as no human foresight could have discerned, many of which have been strikingly fulfilled. Each of these must have been a revelation from God, and confirms the inspiration of the writers. We shall only refer to the prophecies respecting Nineveh, Babylon, and Tyre, leaving the reader to recollect or learn how strikingly they have been fulfilled, and notice a few particulars respecting one or two others.

Respecting the *Jews*, Moses wrote, in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, and the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, these various predictions: “The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar, from the end of the earth, a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from one end of the earth unto the other. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy feet find rest. Ye shall be an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations.” How these predictions have been fulfilled is well known. The Jews have been scattered, persecuted, oppressed, hated, and despised, a proverb and a by-word among all nations. We now see the fulfillment of these prophecies written more than three thousand years ago. Could they have been written without inspi-

ration? If not, then God spake by Moses, and the law given by Moses is the law of God.

Respecting *Christ* it was predicted that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head;" that in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth should be blessed; that the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be; that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks, and after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. It was also predicted, "Unto us a Son is born, unto us a Child is given, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace, and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all: When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin He shall see His seed; He shall bear their iniquities." From these and other plain intimations in the Old Testament, the Jews were led to expect the appearance of some remarkable person about the time that Christ appeared, who should be their Deliverer and King. They, indeed, rejected Christ as the true Messiah, but we find in the New Testament such a complete and remarkable fulfillment of what the prophets had long before foretold, that the con-

viction is forced on our minds that the person described in the prophecies, particularly in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, is the same that suffered on Calvary.

All Scripture, then, is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and for correction in righteousness. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The Word of the Lord endureth forever, and this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you."

It should here be considered that we have attempted to give only an outline of the evidences, both internal and external, which should lead us to believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. To present them fully requires volumes. But we think that such as we have given should seem satisfactory. To doubt is, indeed, possible, and even easy for those who are so disposed, but to believe is most reasonable.

It has sometimes been thought that science and learning are at variance with the truths taught in the Bible. But though they have sometimes seemed to be so at first view, a careful inquiry has uniformly strengthened the conviction in most minds that the Author of the Bible and the Author of Nature is the same. Astronomers, now, vast as their discoveries are, and immeasurable as is the space which they have traversed with telescopic vision, no less than the Psalmist, have occasion to exclaim, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon

and the stars which Thou hast ordained, What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" And geologists have not yet explored the depths of the earth far enough to find any reasons why they should not say, Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth. The long-buried ruins of ancient cities now dug up, the recently deciphered hieroglyphics on Egyptian tablets, and the knowledge acquired by researches in the countries in which Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles lived, have only increased the evidences of the truth and inspiration of the Bible.

Though, too, these evidences do not preclude the possibility and probability of mistakes and errors in the various copies or translations of the original Scriptures, such mistakes and errors have been carefully guarded against by both Jews and Christians, and however numerous they may be, it is evident that *they do not essentially affect the meaning of God's Word.*

The Bible is the Word of God. Though at times doubts may still arise, and we may not be able to answer all the objections which skeptics may urge, or to explain all the difficulties which cavilers may suggest, we should hold fast to this *belief*. On this rock we should rest our souls; to it anchor our fondest hopes. Who can show that unbelief is safer, or wiser? Let eternity decide whether our faith is vain or the pledge of glorious realities.

But it is very inconsistent to profess to believe the

Bible yet doubt some of its plainest truths, or to disregard them. It may be impossible to understand some parts of it, and more or less difficult to comprehend fully its meaning; but for the most part it is plain, and what is plain should be fully believed and strictly obeyed. We should not dare to **disbelieve**, or neglect the Word of God.

THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF GOD.

WITH the Word of God, and reason enlightened by it, we shall find it less difficult than it otherwise would be to acquire a true knowledge of God and religious truths, though it must be imperfect. "Who by searching can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty to perfection?"

First, we learn that there is only *one* God. This, indeed, might be inferred from reason alone, since there are no proofs of the existence of more than one, and there seems to be but one Supreme Power in the universe. Though the heathen worship many gods, and each nation has its own, the same God evidently rules over all. All have the same Creator, the same Preserver, and the same bountiful Benefactor. It is the same sun that rises on the evil and on the good, and the same rain that falls on the just and on the unjust. The same law that holds the earth in its orbit extends to the most distant planet, and doubtless to the remotest star. Hence we should infer that there is only one God. He also declares in His Word, "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me." "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

The Bible reveals God to us as *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*. Some have taught that there are three distinct Persons in the Godhead.

But such language is not used in the Scriptures, is often misunderstood, and is apt to convey a false impression. It is scarcely possible to conceive of three distinct Persons as one Being. We prefer to say that God has revealed himself as the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

No one will deny that God is revealed as the Father, the Father of all, the Father of Christ, and our Heavenly Father. But a great many do not believe that Christ, the Son of God, is truly God; or that the Holy Spirit is God as well as the Father. But the Gospel with God as our Saviour is very different from the Gospel with only a man to set us a good example, and teach us useful doctrines. A Pope, though he should be infallible as the Pope has been declared to be, would not be such a Saviour as we need. Or what need is there of the Holy Spirit, if he is less able to enlighten, renew, and sanctify us than God is?

The Bible, also, plainly teaches that Christ is God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God*. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." It could not be more plainly declared that Christ is God. He, also, claimed to be the Son of God, so that the Jews took up stones to stone him for blasphemy, because, as they said, "Thou, being a man, makest thyself *God*." He said, too, "I and my Father are *one*," and taught that "all should *honor the Son* even as they honor the Father." It

is also written of Him, "He needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." His works, too, testify that He is God, for they are such as God only can perform. He turned water into wine, healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, cast out devils, raised the dead to life, and after His crucifixion rose from the dead the third day. Though His disciples performed similar miracles, they did so only in His name. Nor should it seem more mysterious that God himself should assume a human nature than that the soul should be united with the body. Yet He exists apart from Christ as well as in Christ. Christ, too, should be regarded, not merely as a visible manifestation of God, as some have believed, but as truly God. He is both God and man; as truly God as man.

So, also, God is revealed to us as the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Ghost. How the Holy Spirit differs from God, who is a Spirit, is not explained, but He is called God, as when the Apostle Paul speaks of Christians as the temple of God and the temple of the Holy Ghost in the same connection. The appropriate work of the Holy Spirit in renewing and sanctifying men belongs only to God. Baptism is also administered "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the *Holy Spirit*;" and He is included in the apostolic benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen."

Thus it plainly appears that the only true God has

revealed himself to men as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, so that it is proper to address each, or all of them, as God.

The Bible, also, teaches what is so well expressed in the Westminster Catechism: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."

God is a *Spirit*. As such He is distinct from matter, as our minds are, only He is infinite and independent, while our minds are finite and dependent. Though bodily members are ascribed to Him, the language is not to be understood literally, but as accommodated to our modes of thought. His eyes and ears express His knowledge. His hands and feet express His power. All that we know of God pertains to spirit, not matter. Intelligence, wisdom, and goodness do not belong to matter, but to spirit. Even power resides in the will that imparts and controls it rather than in the matter that conveys it. When we strike a blow, not our arm, but our will exerts the power. So God, as a Spirit, created and upholds all things by the word of His power. "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

God is *eternal*. He has always existed and always will exist. Though it is difficult for us, whose existence has just begun, to conceive of a self-existing Being without a beginning, it is less difficult than to conceive of an uncreated being as beginning to exist, which, indeed, is impossible. All that reason, or the Bible, teaches on this subject is: "Before the

mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." "Thou, O Lord, shalt endure forever; thy years shall have no end."

God is *omnipotent, almighty*. There is no limit to His power. He who created all things can do whatever he pleases; can control and dispose of all things. When He shakes the earth so that the proudest works of men are overthrown; when He lifts up or sinks mountains or islands; when He stirs up the depths of the ocean, and dashes its waves upon the shore; when He pours broad and deep rivers over roaring cataracts; when He thunders in the storm, or flies in the whirlwind, how insignificant appears the power of man compared with His! Think, too, of the power that whirls through space planets like Jupiter, twelve hundred times larger than the earth, at the rate of thirty thousand miles an hour; the sun, more than a million times larger than the earth, at the rate of three thousand miles a minute, yet holds millions of such swift orbs, so that they never deviate from their prescribed courses.

Behold, too, the life-giving and life-preserving power exerted within and around us, that makes us living, active, and intelligent beings, and surrounds us with life in such multiplied forms; trees, herbs, and flowers; beasts and creeping things; fish, birds, and insects, many of them so small that millions of them swarm in a single leaf, or a single drop of water. Amidst changes, decay, and death,

this power endures from age to age, diffusing everywhere life, beauty, and joy.

Nor is the power of God merely physical. It is moral and spiritual. It controls minds as well as matter. All intelligent and moral beings, no less than the universe they inhabit; men, no less than animals and things, are entirely dependent on the will of their Creator. Even their thoughts, feelings, and purposes, though voluntary, are dependent on His will. Not even their free wills are unrestrained and uncontrolled by a higher power than their own.

Reason alone would teach us that nothing can be independent of the Creator; that His power both over matter and mind is unlimited. The Bible affirms the same in numerous passages like these: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made: For he spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast." "He giveth to all life and breath and all things." "Behold, the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. It is he that sitteth on the circle of the earth; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to naught; he maketh the devices of the people of none effect." "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; he turneth it whithersoever he will." "Surely the wrath of man shall praise

thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

God is *omniscient*, infinite in knowledge and wisdom. He knows all things past, present, and future. Infinite power without infinite knowledge and wisdom to regulate and control it, would be awful. Instead of producing such a harmonious and beautiful universe as we behold, it would tend only to confusion and ruin. As he who makes an instrument must know how to make it, and as imperfect knowledge on the part of the maker is sure to render an instrument imperfect, so He who made all things, and made them so perfect, must possess infinite knowledge and wisdom. Without them He could not have created us and all things, nor accomplish wise and good purposes. But though there are many things which we, ignorant as we are, cannot fully harmonize with his omniscience, we see enough to convince us that when his plans shall be completed, they will appear to be the wisest and best that could be conceived.

The microscope reveals imperfection in the finest works of art. It makes the edge of the sharpest razor appear like a saw. Apply it, however, to the works of God, and it will not reveal the slightest imperfection, but the most exquisite finish in the minutest parts. Every part of a butterfly's wing, magnified a thousand times, appears no less perfect and beautiful than the whole as it is usually seen. Considering, then, how infinite are the works of God in nature, and how many intelligent beings

owe their existence to Him, while not even a sparrow falls to the ground without Him, how can he be less than omniscient?

It is most difficult to conceive of God's foreknowledge in respect to the thoughts and volitions of such beings as we are, who are conscious that we think and act as we please. Yet this does not prove it to be impossible. "Known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world." "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" "All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." "O Lord, thou has searched me and known me; thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thoughts afar off; thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

Besides such passages of Scripture as those just cited, which plainly assert the omniscience of God, all the prophecies which have been fulfilled prove that he foreknows even the thoughts and volitions of men. Even Christ crucified and slain by wicked hands was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

God is *omnipresent*. We should not think of Him as confined to any particular place, because we are. We are finite; He is infinite. We should infer that He is present wherever His power is exerted, or His knowledge and wisdom are displayed, which is everywhere. He is in one place as really as in another.

There is no place in which He is not. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?" "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?" "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord."

God is *unchangeable*, always the same. Possessing infinite knowledge, wisdom, and power, there can be no reason why He should change, and any change would make Him less perfect. Nor are there any indications that He has ever changed, or ever will change. What He does at one time may, indeed, be different from what He has done before, but it is a part of his unalterable purposes. Men constantly change. Their plans to-day may be altered to-morrow. They grow better or worse. One generation quickly succeeds another. Empires rise and fall. But "God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." "With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." "I am the Lord, I change not."

We have thus considered what are called the *natural perfections* or *attributes* of God. These are essential to his being; without them he would not be God; but they do not determine his moral character as good or evil. This depends on his *moral*

perfections, such as render him infinitely lovely and glorious, the only worthy object of religious worship.

God is *love*. This best expresses his moral character. It brings to view not simply one of his moral excellences, but all of them in one. As love comprehends all that he requires of us, so his own infinite love comprehends all his moral perfections. His holiness, justice, goodness, mercy, and truth, are only different expressions of his *love*. His holiness is love disposing him to approve of whatever is right, and to hate all sin. His justice is love disposing him to reward the righteous and to punish the wicked, for the sake of promoting the greatest good. His goodness is love disposing him to make all his creatures happy so far as is consistent with justice. His mercy is love disposing him to forgive and save the guilty, and even disposed him to become incarnate, and to suffer for their sakes. His truth, or faithfulness, is love disposing him to fulfill all his promises and threatenings.

God is *holy*. He approves of whatever is right, and hates all sin. This is evident from the fact that he has made us so that we approve of holiness, and disapprove of sin, especially as we see it in others. In all parts of the Bible he represents holiness as pleasing, and sin as displeasing to himself. He was not pleased but greatly displeased with the sin of Adam and Eve, the murder of Abel by his brother Cain, the wickedness of men before the Flood, also the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah, the idolatry

of the ancient heathen nations, the hardness of Pharaoh's heart, the murmurings of the Israelites in the wilderness, and their proneness to idolatry. Even the sins of the best men, such as Lot, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses and David, greatly displeased him. In no instance has he ever justified sin, but he has uniformly condemned it. On the other hand, he has uniformly been pleased with the righteous, and approved of their righteous deeds. His holiness is often declared in the Scriptures as "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." "The heavens are not clean in his sight." "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

God is *just*. He does not treat the good and bad alike. He rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked, not indeed immediately, nor in all respects in this life, as they deserve, but sooner or later. What appears like injustice will be rectified hereafter. What is deferred in time will be executed in eternity. Virtue is rewarded and vice is punished even now enough to show that God is just, especially in course of one's life-time. Dishonesty, vice, and crime may seem to go unpunished for a time, but it has been found that honesty is the best policy, and that virtue and morality are conducive to prosperity and happiness, while vice and crime lead to poverty and wretchedness. Moreover, the displays of justice in this life seem to point to a future retribution, so that even the wicked often

express the wish, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." God also forewarns us of the final judgment, when he will reward the righteous and punish the wicked according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil. Though, too, there is hope for sinners, even the chief, there would not have been if Christ had not suffered for us; and even now there is no escape for the impenitent. That God can be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, will be considered in another connection, but it is a fundamental truth of the Gospel.

God is *good*, or *benevolent*. He desires and seeks the happiness of others. The existence of a great number and variety of living beings capable of enjoyment is proof of this. Their capacities for happiness show that he desires them to be happy, as happy as they are capable of being. When men make things they design them for the uses to which they are adapted. So God evidently designed that his creatures should be happy.

Our own existence, especially, is proof of God's goodness. We derive pleasure from life itself. It is pleasant to live. We enjoy sight. Music charms us. We relish our food and drink. Various kinds of knowledge afford us delight. We enjoy the society of relatives and friends. We are capable, too, of enjoying God, so that we may have on earth a foretaste of the happiness in heaven, and hereafter participate in fullness of joy. All this proves the goodness of our Creator, since he must have designed

and must still desire us to be as happy as he made us capable of being.

There are, also, innumerable intelligent beings like ourselves endowed with equal or greater capacities for enjoyment. Millions of such beings have lived, or are still living, on the earth. Countless millions more, doubtless, inhabit other worlds. In heaven there is a great multitude which no man can number. Though all such beings are not happy, all are capable of being so, and therefore prove that goodness prompted God to create them, and still prompts him to preserve them.

God, too, created and preserves beasts, fowls, fish, and all inferior living creatures, with various capacities for enjoyment. There are obvious reasons why he should create different orders of beings. A greater amount of enjoyment is thus secured. But the meanest creature capable of enjoying life affords proof of the goodness of the Creator, and if it should be measured by the number of his creatures and their capacities, how great is his goodness!

Another proof of God's goodness is the adaptation of things to the wants of his creatures. "Our health, food, and clothing, are means of enjoyment to us daily throughout our lives. Our friends and connections, also, continually and extensively contribute to our happiness. The pleasantness of the seasons; the beauty and grandeur of the earth and the heavens; the various kinds of agreeable sounds ever fluctuating on our ears; the immensely various and delightful uses of language; the interchanges of thought and

feeling ; the peace and safety afforded by institutions of government ; the power of motion and the gratification of useful employments, are all daily and hourly sources of good to men, all furnished directly or indirectly by the hand of God. If we consider the number and importance of these and like blessings, and how constantly they are bestowed, we cannot fail, if we are influenced by a just and candid spirit, to unite with the Psalmist in his wish, "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." "How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness."

Again, the actual enjoyment experienced by living creatures proves the goodness of God. Ordinarily, inferior creatures appear to enjoy life. They relish their food. They play, or lie down to repose. The birds sing. All kinds of animals seem gratified in various ways. But they are all dependent on God. He supplies their wants, feeds the ravens, gives the beasts their food, and notices a sparrow falling to the ground. "The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing."

Men, also, experience much enjoyment even in this world. Though more or less unhappy in many respects, they on the whole enjoy life, often very much. There is much more happiness than misery among them. Nor should we measure the benevolence of God by the amount of enjoyment they ex-

perience, but rather by what they might experience if they did not mar their own peace, or if others did not disturb it. Sin produces much suffering and sorrow where God would diffuse only joy. Even the trials and afflictions of life are often ordered by him in great kindness. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Hence, though there is much sorrow in the world, we should not hesitate to say, "Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits." "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." "O taste and see that the Lord is good." "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

In regard to the objection that sin and misery are inconsistent with the goodness of God, it is a sufficient answer, that in view of the multiplied proofs of his goodness it is unreasonable to urge an objection which may arise from our ignorance. The kindest parents should not be distrusted by their children, who cannot understand all the reasons for the treatment which they receive, because in some respects it may seem unkind. No more should we distrust the goodness of God, because there are some things which at present seem inconsistent with it. We should especially regard ourselves as alone responsible for our sins, and the misery which flows from them.

God is *merciful*. He is good to the ill-deserving. He bestows blessings on the evil and unthankful. He offers pardon to sinners. His mercy, too, is unlimited,

except by justice, and, in respect to men for whom salvation has been provided, it is unlimited, except by their own refusal of it. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." This will be particularly considered in another connection as exhibiting the mercy of God not only as consistent with his holiness and justice, but also blended with them in one wonderful expression of his love. We can never comprehend fully; we can only begin to comprehend with all saints, what is the length and breadth, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. We can only express it by saying, God *so loved* the world.

The mercy of God is further manifested by his forbearance and long suffering towards sinners. Some impeach his justice; others his goodness. Many neglect his worship, and profane his name. Some deceive, defraud, and oppress others. All are evil and unthankful. Yet he is gracious. He still invites, still urges them to accept the offer of pardon and eternal life.

"While life prolongs its precious light,
Mercy is found and peace is given."

What more could God do? "What," he asks, "could have been done more for my vineyard that I have not done?"

God is *true* and *faithful*. He will fulfill his word. His promises shall not fail. His threatenings, though

terrible to his enemies, will certainly be executed. The past is a pledge of the future. "God is not a man that he should lie." "Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth." "Thy faithfulness is unto all generations."

THE PURPOSES OF GOD.

God has *purposes*. He is not a listless, inactive Being, satisfied with mere existence without any worthy designs to accomplish or plans by which to accomplish them. A Being of infinite knowledge, wisdom, power, and goodness, must think of something to do and purpose to do it. Indeed all the proofs of God's existence are derived from His works, which He must have purposed before they were begun.

The *purposes* of God are *eternal*. This is apt to seem incredible, especially in respect to men and other moral beings. It is thought that God must wait till He learn how we shall act before He can form His purposes respecting us. But it should be considered that His eternal purposes are also His present and future purposes, and just the same that they would be if they were not eternal. We cannot form any fixed plan or unalterable purpose beforehand because we are so ignorant and dependent. We often find it desirable or necessary to change our minds in many respects. Our wisest plans are often frustrated in the midst of their execution. Our work is frequently left unfinished, and perhaps just begun. But we should not judge

of God by ourselves. He knew everything at the beginning as well as He knows it now, or ever will know it. Hence there is no reason why His purposes should not have been always the same that they are now or will be at any future time. No unforeseen or unexpected event can ever occur to change them or make it desirable that they should be changed. "He is of one mind, and who can turn Him?—and what His soul desireth even that He doeth." "My counsel," He says, "shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

The purposes of God *extend to every person and every thing*. Since He created and preserves all things, He must have had purposes respecting them either already fulfilled or being fulfilled, for it is inconceivable that He should ever act without a purpose, that He should create and preserve the meanest creature or the least thing without any design.

The eternal purposes of God are apt to suggest difficulties which cannot be fully explained and objections which cannot be satisfactorily answered, but these should not lead us to disbelieve what reason and the Bible plainly teach. They arise from ignorance, misconception, and wrong inferences. They relate chiefly to sin and moral responsibility, which we shall soon consider as consistent with His eternal purposes. Of one thing, however, we may be assured beforehand, that it is the *eternal purpose of God that no one shall be compelled to be sinful or holy*. This is as certain as anything else that He has

purposed, and none of His purposes can interfere with our free agency and moral responsibility whether they seem to do so or not.

What the purposes of God are, we may learn to some extent from what He has done, and more fully from His Word, though we should expect to know them only in part and very imperfectly. His chief design should seem to have been to create and preserve innumerable intelligent and moral beings more or less like ourselves to glorify and enjoy Him for ever. The material universe, vast and wonderful as it is, seems to be designed for the abode of some such beings distinguished from mere spirits by bodily forms, various perhaps as the worlds they inhabit. The earth, at least, is fitted for the temporal abode of men, producing an abundant supply of food and clothed in beauty and grandeur.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

The *Providence* of God is His direction and control of all events and all things for the fulfillment of His eternal purposes. Some seem to think that after creating the universe and establishing the laws of nature, He left them without any further care or control. Others think that He governs the universe by general laws, but that it is unworthy of Him to notice so insignificant a part of it as the earth or the people inhabiting it. It is supposed to be degrading to the character of God to think that He attends to such little things as interest us and fill up the history of mankind. The reason why some think thus is

because they judge God by themselves. They cannot attend to many different things at the same time. If they are occupied with little things they must neglect more important things. Or they will not condescend to notice persons whom they regard as far inferior to themselves. Hence they imagine that God cannot or will not exercise a particular providence, though he may exercise a general providence.

But how can the Providence of God be general without being particular? How can He regulate the whole without regulating each part? How can His care and control extend to all men without extending to each individual? How can He take perfect care of individuals without attending to their least as well as their most important concerns? To say that the Providence of God is only general and does not extend to individuals and particular things, is as inconsistent as to say that the power which moves a vast and complicated machine only moves the great wheels and not the little wheels.

Besides, does it properly lower our conceptions of God to think that while He attends to the vast concerns of the universe, He also attends to the least things? We should not honor a statesman less who attends to the little wants of his children or helps the poor and needy, while he administers faithfully the affairs of government. No more should we think it unworthy of God, but rather a striking proof of His infinite excellence and greatness that while He guides suns and planets in their orbits he, at the same time,

makes every spire of grass grow, every leaf expand, and every flower bloom. How incomprehensible and past finding out He must be, who, while He upholds and governs the universe, attends also to its least concerns. We rob Him of his highest glory if we think that He does not care for the meanest of His creatures.

The Providence of God is plainly taught in the Bible: "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly father feedeth them." "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your father." "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." "Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps."

What is of less consequence than numbering the hairs of our head? What is less trifling than the falling of a sparrow? Since, then, God's care extends to these things, does it not extend to every thing? "He saith to the snow, be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain and to the great rain of His strength."

The Bible, also, furnishes many illustrations of God's overruling Providence, though, at the times referred to, He seemed to have no knowledge of what was transpiring. For instance, when Joseph was sold by his brethren, it would have seemed that if God had

any control over men He would have prevented such injustice and cruelty. Yet Joseph himself afterwards said to his brethren, Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it to pass as at this day to save much people alive. So when he was falsely accused and imprisoned it might have seemed that God was unconcerned. "But the Lord was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house."

A common objection to the belief of God's Providence is the prevalence of sin and misery. But this is no more inconsistent with His Providence than it is with His wisdom and goodness without His Providence. If it had resulted from the want of His care and control, it would seem that He might have prevented it by adopting the wisest and best means, but now, we should infer, that such means were used, though ineffectual, and that sin and misery will yet be overruled for ultimate good.

THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

THE *moral government of God* is His authority and control over moral beings. Moral beings are such as are either holy or sinful. In this respect they are distinguished from other animate beings. A horse or a sheep is neither holy nor sinful; but God and the angels in heaven are holy; men and fallen angels are sinful.

What chiefly constitutes a created moral being is *reason*, by which he can learn truths which cannot be perceived by the senses or instinct—such as the existence of God and our obligations to Him and one another; *conscience*, by which he is capable of distinguishing right from wrong; and *will*, or the power of choice between good and evil, holiness and sin.

All beings possessing these faculties, *reason*, *conscience*, and *will*, are moral beings, holy or sinful, accordingly as they think, feel, and act right or wrong, from *choice*. Circumstances may affect the degrees of holiness or sinfulness, and, consequently, of the merited reward or punishment, but cannot essentially change the character. This is determined by a person's *choice*. If he uniformly chooses right, he is holy; if he ever chooses what he knows or might know is wrong, he is sinful. An ignorant person may be less sinful than he otherwise would be; so

may a person surrounded with bad influences or exposed to very great temptations; but any evil thought, feeling, or act, that is *voluntary*, makes him a sinner, though not if it be *really* involuntary.

God holds all created moral beings *accountable* to Himself as their Righteous Judge. This is evidently right and just. Indeed, it would be plainly wrong and unjust for Him to allow such beings to commit sin, and thus injure others as well as dishonor Him without holding them responsible for their sins, and punishing them sooner or later as they deserve. It should seem right and just, also, that He should reward all holy beings with His favor and such happiness as they are capable of enjoying.

A sense of moral responsibility to God is natural to men. That most distinguished statesman, Daniel Webster, once said with the deepest seriousness, The most important thought that ever occupied my mind was that of my individual responsibility to God. So most reflecting minds are impressed with the same thought. It cannot be eradicated from human consciousness. Believe what they may, and reason as they may, men cannot get rid of the conviction that they are accountable to a Supreme Being, and so far as they have a knowledge of Him, to God. They may generally be unmindful of or disregard it, yet it often flashes on their minds. Many, it is true, are so ignorant and degraded that they seem to have no sense of it, and some persons eminent for their learning and of superior intelligence, discard the idea of any higher authority than that of civil government;

yet, even in these cases, men often feel more than they appear to or acknowledge. "We might," as another writer has remarked, "follow the man whose conscience seemed seared and whose heart seemed reprobate, and in his hours of calm reflection we should see the banished idea of responsibility returning in its vividness, and the dread of a Supreme and Omniscient Being forcing itself upon the soul. Especially we would make our appeal to minds where the conscience sits invested with some authority, and where she is listened to with some degree of deference; where the moral sense is not drowned in sensuality, nor bewildered and led astray by a false philosophy; and in such minds we shall find that the consciousness of moral responsibility springs up naturally, and is strong."

What, too, would be the condition of the world and the state of society if the idea of accountability to God should be obliterated from every mind? The "*reign of terror*" in France, when in the streets of Paris human blood flowed like water; and the more recent history of that unhappy country furnish a striking example of the consequences which would result from banishing entirely a sense of moral responsibility to God. It is a happy thing for us and for human society that the impression, though far too feeble, is generally prevalent, that the Searcher of hearts knows all that transpires within and around us, and will hereafter render to every one according to his works, whether they be good or whether they be evil. "God shall judge

the righteous and the wicked. I, the Lord, search the heart;" "I try the reins even to give to every man according to the fruit of his doings."

Perfect obedience to the will of God is required of His moral subjects. This is taught more or less clearly by their consciences, enlightened as they are or might be by reason, and such knowledge as they are capable of acquiring. It was first expressed in the moral law, the Ten Commandments, written on two tables of stone, and given to Moses on Mount Sinai. It was afterwards more fully revealed in the prophecies and the Psalms of the Old Testament. But it is most clearly revealed by Christ and the Apostles in the New Testament. It is comprehended as Christ said in these two commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

HOLY ANGELS.

All moral beings were created holy, and it should seem that most of them still remain so. The *number of holy angels is represented as very great*. A multitude of the heavenly host appeared to the shepherds to whom the birth of Christ was announced, yet it should be supposed that these were only a small part of the whole number. It should seem probable that far the greater part of the universe, inconceivably vast as it is, abounds with various orders of intelligent beings who delight in the

worship and service of God. There are Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers, all created by Him and for Him. There are Cherubim and Seraphim above His throne. In Revelation the number of angels round about the throne is said to be ten thousand times ten thousands, and thousands of thousands, which, doubtless, means an indefinitely great number. These are all holy. They all love God supremely. They are all heartily engaged in His worship and service. "They rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

Angels are *very exalted and superior beings*. Of the angel that came to roll away the stone from Christ's sepulcher it is written: "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment was white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers became as dead men." The Apostle John wrote: "I saw another angel coming down from heaven clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire." These emblems of their character and rank denote their superiority, especially as compared with men.

Angels, also, are *endowed with wonderful power and activity*. They are described as mighty, and excelling in strength. An angel destroyed in three days three-score and ten thousand out of Judah because David numbered the people. Another angel destroyed in one night an hundred, four-score, and five thousand of Sennacherib's army.

Angels are represented as flying swiftly, appearing suddenly from heaven as though their speed could not be measured by time.

Angels, too, as it appears, *are acquainted with the condition and interested in the welfare of men.* "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" "Which things the angels desire to look into." At the birth of Christ angels brought the good tidings of great joy, and proclaimed peace on earth, good-will to men. There is joy, too, in the presence of the angels when one sinner repents. Since, also, Christ represented Lazarus when he died as carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, it may be inferred that they attend the sick beds of God's chosen people and accompany their spirits to the heavenly rest.

This, then, is one of the sublime and glorious truths taught in the Bible, that men are not the only intelligent beings God has created, but there is an innumerable company of angels in His presence, or sent on errands of love and mercy to various parts of the universe, all holy and blessed for ever. It is fitted, also, to beget in ourselves the highest aspirations and noblest purposes, since, as we shall consider at another time, it is our privilege, through the redemption that is in Christ, to become like them and share in their everlasting happiness.

FALLEN ANGELS.

It is sad, indeed, to turn away from the glory of God and the blessedness of holy angels, to consider the prevalence of sin and misery. But as there are spots on the sun shining in full splendor, so there is sin and misery in the moral universe. To us, in the midst of one spot, it may seem that the darkness is greater than the light; that it is midnight, with scarcely the dawn of day; or being accustomed to the darkness we may call it, as many do, light. But this is not what the Bible teaches. It does not leave sin and misery out of view, or represent them as trifling evils, but it leads us to believe that they are confined to a comparatively small number of intelligent beings, and these so controlled by God that their sins are being overruled for good, and will be the occasion of greatly increased happiness in the universe.

It may seem mysterious that perfectly holy beings should become sinful, yet the Bible speaks of angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, being reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. It also represents the number of such beings, though comparatively few, as very great, and their power for evil as very dreadful. The chief among them is the *Devil*. The rest are his angels, so united with him in his malicious designs, that all the evil they do is properly ascribed to him as their leader.

How the Devil and his angels became sinful is not explained, nor is it important for us to know. It

only concerns us to guard our minds and hearts against their corrupting influence. Yet it is certain that God is not the author of sin; that He hates it, though he permits it, and overrules it for good. It must have originated in those who first committed it. It should seem, too, that finite moral beings must be *liable* to sin since they must act from *choice*, or cease to be moral beings. For aught we *know*, some would certainly sin under the wisest and best moral government that could exist, and we should infer this from the fact that there is sin under the moral government of God. Though it would, doubtless, have been better if none had sinned, and all had remained holy as they were created, we have no reason to think His government itself could have been better than it is.

It should seem, also, that temptations to sin may arise from what constitutes a perfect moral being. Adam and Eve were exposed to temptations from their bodily appetites and passions, which, in themselves, were good and useful. Temptations, too, may arise from such mental characteristics as self-reliance, ambition, self-esteem, or just pride, without which what would moral beings be worth? Pride, indeed, not itself sinful, but becoming inordinate, seems to have been the first sin, as may be inferred from the passage of Scripture: "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with *pride*, he fall into the condemnation of the devil." This and other sources of temptation, when subject to the will of God, contribute to the highest perfection of moral beings. Temp-

tation itself is not sin. When resisted it strengthens the character. To overcome temptation is noble, *heroic*. It makes a holy being *more* holy. Would it have been better if God had not permitted the angels that sinned or men to be tempted? Is it better to keep a child entirely removed from temptation, or that he should have such a disposition that he would never be tempted? Is it not rather *best* that temptation, whether weak or strong, should always be resisted? Would it not have been *best* if the fallen angels had overcome it? They *might have done so*. They were not *compelled* to sin. They sinned from *choice*. Sin is *voluntary*, otherwise it is not sin. What is written as applicable to us was, doubtless, equally applicable to them. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Since, then, they yielded to temptation, it was just that they should be banished from His presence, and it is probable that they did not need to be driven out of heaven, but that, as it is written, they left their own habitation, and, of their own accord, fled into the blackness of darkness for ever. Sinners naturally shun holy beings, and fear God.

The knowledge of evil as the consequence of sin is evidently a powerful means of preventing it, and, for aught we *know*, any moral beings without such knowledge would be apt to yield to temptation, and the fallen angels may have been the

means of confirming the rest in holiness. Or, though we should suppose, that God could have created moral beings so that none would sin, for aught we *know* they must have been very inferior beings. Sin is not, therefore, the *necessary* means of the greatest good, for none have been compelled to commit it; and it would have been inconceivably better, and more pleasing to God, if all had proved steadfast in holiness; but it should seem that sin has been wisely permitted, as the means of confirming holy beings in holiness and exalting them to a higher degree of moral perfection. Sinners, too, who repent and become holy will be *more* holy than they otherwise would have been. They will love God more and be more devoted to His worship and service. "To whom much is forgiven the same loves much."

The question then arises, would it have been better if God had not created any moral beings or only inferior beings, instead of permitting so much sin and misery? Should all the joy in heaven be extinguished to prevent the misery of the wicked? If the happiness of holy beings makes sin and misery *necessary*, we answer, Yes. Let God be *just*. But if the guilt of sin rests on sinners; if God is in no respects responsible for it; if he hates it, and only permits it as the occasion of the greatest good, then, though the fallen angels are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day; though the earth is filled with sin and misery; and though we are ourselves sinners, justly exposed to utter and endless misery, we say

God is *holy, and just, and good*, and all the holy angels sing, Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

CREATION OF MAN.

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.” Whatever else this may mean, it means that man was created *holy*. As such our first parents were happy in the enjoyment of God and the consciousness of their own dignity and excellence. They were placed in the garden of Eden filled with everything that was good for food or pleasant to the eye—a beautiful and magnificent abode, in which there was no need of toil, but only pleasant employment, without anxiety or care, without trouble or sorrow, without fear or danger. They were created, too, to be the parents of many millions who were to be born like themselves, innocent and happy, to people the earth. They were to fill the world with their offspring, all like themselves, the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life.

THE TEMPTATION AND FALL OF MAN.

One condition only was to be fulfilled that our first parents and their offspring might be for ever happy. “The Lord commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” This was to test their love and obedience, for which, chiefly, God could regard them with favor. What would a moral being

be worth without love? What is love without obedience? And what is obedience that can be secured only by removal from all temptation? Parents expect their children to obey them though they may be ever so strongly tempted, and they are most pleased when their children prove firm and steadfast in their obedience in the midst of great temptations and in spite of powerful corrupting influences. It was proper, therefore, that God should permit them to be tempted. Nor was the temptation too great to be resisted, though, as presented by the devil, it was, doubtless, much greater than it appears to have been. Adam and Eve were not *compelled* to sin. There was no eternal decree of God that made it *necessary* for them to pluck and eat the forbidden fruit. They did it from *choice*, and after being plainly forewarned of the consequences; they might have done otherwise. They could have resisted and overcome the temptation, though all the allurements and enticements that Satan could devise were presented to their minds. Oh, that they had stood firm in their obedience to God! They would then have displayed a heroism unknown in the history of mankind. Then Eden would have been the Thermopylæ of the world—the place where holiness and happiness triumphed over sin and misery. God would have been as much pleased with the confirmed holiness of our first parents and their posterity as He has been displeased with their sinfulness, and the earth would have been filled ever since with peace and joy instead of suffering and sorrow.

But the *result* of the temptation of Adam and Eve in Eden is well known. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

"Earth felt the wound, and Nature, from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
That all was lost."

Here, it should be considered, that sin is not confined to the external act of disobedience, but chiefly affects the heart. Before our first parents plucked and ate the forbidden fruit they had become sinful. The spirit of disobedience was begotten within them, and their sinfulness did not cease when they ceased eating the fruit. They were not like children who disobey their parents, yet retain their filial affection, but they had ceased to love God supremely, and had become selfish. It is probable that they soon repented, but they could not be restored to their original state of holiness. They had fallen, and the consequences of their fall they could not escape. God had forewarned them, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and having sinned they had begun to suffer the penalty of sin. This may have included the death of the body referred to afterwards, but it was already executed. The life of holiness had been extinguished. Death in sin had followed. It was no longer pleasant for our first parents to hear the voice of the Lord God walking in the midst of the garden. They were afraid and

hid themselves, not because they were naked, but because they had sinned.

It has been thought unreasonable to consider spiritual death or a sinful state as a part of the penalty of sin. Perhaps it is not. Perhaps the proper penalty of sin consists only in the suffering and sorrow connected with it. Yet it cannot be denied that sin leads to sin, that one step downward naturally leads to another, and then another, till, ere long, with rapid strides, a hopeless perdition is reached. Hence we tremble when we see any one beginning a career of vice and crime, or even when he regards any sins as trifling and persists in them. Now, indeed, there is hope for sinners as long as they live, but if there had been no Saviour there would have been no salvation from sin. Like leprosy, it would have been incurable, everlasting death. Such were the natural consequences of sin to our first parents. They were, also, driven out of Eden, deprived of the favor of God, and cursed with the various ills of life and with death, as well as exposed to everlasting destruction.

THE SINFULNESS OF MEN IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE FALL.

It is seldom denied that all men are sinners. Some consider sin as unavoidable in our present state, and, therefore, a misfortune rather than sin. Others regard it as a trifling evil not deserving much notice, except in some flagrant forms of vice and crime. But all admit that they are sinners, or, at least, that others are.

How we became sinful is, in some respects, a question of little importance compared with the question, What must I do to be saved?—but in other respects it is of great importance. At any rate it is often asked, and the Bible answers it, though it does not explain *how* or *why* such consequences followed the act to which they are ascribed. “By one man sin entered into the world;” “by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation;” “by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.” These different expressions of the Apostle Paul all plainly refer to the sin of Adam as having occasioned the sinfulness of all his posterity. This has been thought unreasonable and unjust, but apart from the Scriptures it accords with well known facts. It is certain that children resemble their parents more or less in their features, physical constitution, minds and dispositions. They inherit diseases, strong or weak intellects, good or bad dispositions or traits of character, yet less uniformly than they inherit a corrupt nature that certainly leads them, sooner or later, to commit sin. Some call this a sinful nature. Others prefer to call it neither sinful nor holy. But it is such that all men become sinners.

There has been much controversy about the *guilt* of Adam’s sin, owing chiefly to different meanings attached to the word *guilt*. Some say all are guilty of his sin, meaning that all are liable to suffer for it as in the case of infants, who often suffer much, and even die before they are considered capable of sinning. Others say that none are guilty of any sin

except their own, meaning that they are not blamable for it, and need not repent of it. The former meaning was once common, but not at present. Hence, though all suffer more or less in consequence of the fall, none are properly guilty except of their own sins. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

It is apt to seem hard that we should be liable to sin and suffering in consequence of the sin of Adam nearly six thousand years ago. But it should be considered that though all are born so that they sin as soon as they are capable of sinning, *none are really compelled to sin*, all act from *choice*—sin is *voluntary*, otherwise it is not sin. Besides, would it have been better if each one had been put on trial for himself? Think of the fallen angels, for whom there is no salvation. If we had not shared in the consequences of the fall we could not have shared in the benefits of Christ's redemption. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." It is by no means certain that all would not have become sinners if they had been created holy and put on trial each one for himself, and if any had fallen there could have been no salvation for them. It should seem, therefore, that God's purposes are wiser than

the opinions of men. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men."

MEN NATURALLY DESTITUTE OF HOLINESS.

All men are naturally not only sinful, but *entirely destitute of holiness*. This means the same as *total depravity*, but the latter term is more liable to be misunderstood, and is apt to convey the impression that men are as bad as they can be, which, certainly, is not true. On the contrary, the worst men have many good qualities, and exhibit many excellent traits of character. Generally there is much more that is good in men than bad. In many instances they are naturally lovely, and exhibit the most shining virtues. They are often generous, patriotic, heroic. We should never really despise ourselves or others. All men still bear the image of their Creator, though defaced. Many, even as they are naturally, are highly useful and adorn society. Christ loved the young man, to whom He said, Yet lackest thou one thing. That one thing was, evidently, supreme love to God to take the place of supreme selfishness. Others are naturally destitute of the same. Holiness is wanting. Sin only reigns in the natural heart.

The distinction between holiness and morality or virtue is apt to be overlooked, but is of the utmost importance. A child may be ever so good to his chosen companions, but if he has no filial affection and no regard for his parent's authority or wishes he is not pleasing or acceptable to them,

and if he should persist in such treatment of them they might justly disown and disinherit him. So God is justly displeased with the best men in their natural state; for, though they may be ever so amiable and virtuous in their dispositions and conduct towards men, they are ungrateful and disobedient to God. The language of their hearts is, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? And what profit shall we have if we pray to Him?" The Bible speaks of them as the enemies of God: "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me."

Ingratitude, disobedience, enmity, rebellion! What is thought of an ungrateful child? How ought a disobedient son to be regarded? How should the enemies of a good and wise Ruler be treated? What should be done with rebels against a good government? But sin is ingratitude, disobedience, enmity, rebellion against God. As much, therefore, as God is greater and holier than men, so much is the guilt of sinners aggravated in His sight.

But many say, I am not conscious of any enmity towards God, on the contrary, admire Him, and feel very grateful for His mercies. The most profane and wicked say this no less sincerely than the virtuous and upright, and so they feel towards their God, such a Being as they imagine God to be; but the God of

the Bible, *rightly understood* and *fully believed*, they have no faith in; He is not in all their thoughts; the idea of Him is dreadful to them; they do not like to retain Him in their knowledge. The God of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who cannot look on iniquity, they have no sympathy with; the God of Providence, dispensing evil as well as good; the God that hates sin, and will by no means clear the guilty; the God that will only reward the righteous with everlasting life, and will punish the wicked with everlasting destruction; the true God, *Jehovah*, they do not love. If they think of Him, as He is revealed in the Scriptures, they feel opposed to Him and His laws. Many have said, and more think, that such a Being as the Bible represents Him to be would be a *tyrant*.

The history of mankind proves that they are naturally destitute of love to God. The heathen, though the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, have, for ages, worshiped idols of wood and stone, beasts and creeping things, instead of the true God. The Jews, His chosen people, to whom He had revealed Himself by special signs and wonders, were long prone to idolatry, killed His prophets, rejected and crucified His Son, their Saviour. In Christian countries, Atheists have been numerous, and Infidels have written volumes to prove that the Bible is not true; large masses of the people utterly disregard it, desecrate the Sabbath, neglect religious worship, or conform only to its outward rites and ceremonies. Every where pro-

fanity is heard. Gross vices abound. Dishonesty, fraud, oppression, cruelty, murder, and wars, are common. Thus, it appears, that men are naturally sinful rather than holy—not merely sinful in some respects, but though more or less good and praiseworthy, in no respects truly holy, devoted to God, and obedient to His will.

It has been admitted that there are many natural excellences and shining virtues among men. But it should also be considered how much even these have been improved and adorned under the influence of the Christian religion. To learn what men naturally are, what all would have been without the influence of God's grace, we need to look at the degradation and vices of the heathen contrasted with the civilization and refinement of Christian nations. Yet we are taught that the difference is less in reality than in appearance; that the heathen are not naturally worse than others, and even that it will be more tolerable for them in the day of judgment than for many of the most enlightened and refined in Christian countries. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "Both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin." "There is none that seeketh after God. There is none that doeth good, no, not one."

THE NATURAL AND PENAL CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.

Sin *produces misery*. It has occasioned all the misery that has been in the world, and leads to utter and endless misery. It has brought with itself care, trouble, toil, degradation, ignorance, poverty, wretch-

edness, shame, remorse, sorrow, pain, sickness, and death—all human woes. It often prompts the exclamation, “O that I had wings like a dove, for then I would fly away and be at rest!” We are so accustomed to evils that we seldom think they might have been less. They seem so unavoidable that we are not apt to realize that they are the consequences of sin. They lead us to doubt the wisdom and goodness of God, and, perhaps, to complain of injustice in His providential dispensations, though we ought only to repent of and forsake sin, and, if possible, bring others to repentance. Misery prevails, not because God is regardless of it or unmerciful, but because men are sinners. Death is attended with misery. The fear of it, its pangs, its gloom, and its terrors, are dreadful; yet death passed on all men, for that all have sinned.

Misery is, to a great extent, the *natural consequence of sin*. If our first parents had been permitted to remain in the garden of Eden and to eat of its fruit after their fall, they would have been unhappy there. If God had continued to visit and talk with them they would have continued to be afraid of Him, and to hide from His presence. The loss of God’s favor, remorse, shame, and forebodings of evil, were enough to embitter their existence even in the midst of plenty and the loveliest scenes. But they were also driven out of Eden under the displeasure and curse of God. Apart, too, from the plan of salvation, their misery would have been hopeless and eternal.

Such, likewise, have been the sad consequences of sin in all ages, and they are still the same. Deprived of communion with God, sinners feel an aching void in their souls which they vainly endeavor to fill with worldly vanities and pleasures. A consciousness of guilt disturbs their peace. Thoughts of death and the judgment to come alarm them. Weary of toil, burdened with cares, afflicted with pain, sickness, and losses of property and friends, disquieted by the jealousies, envyings, reproaches, and injuries of others, their cup of sorrow is often full and overflowing. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards." "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

There is much, indeed, to mitigate human misery in this world. Men have many pleasures. On the whole they enjoy life. Many of the ungodly prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Sometimes sin appears to be more profitable than holiness. But this is because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; because God is gracious, forbearing, and long-suffering; because the uplifted arm of justice is stayed, and the voice of mercy pleads, Spare, yet a little longer. But, sooner or later, the judgment will come, and the dreadful consequences of sin overtake the guilty.

"But soon, ah soon! approaching night
Will blot out every hope of heaven."

SELF-JUSTIFICATION IMPOSSIBLE.

Justification with God is being regarded and treated by Him as *innocent*. Holy beings are justified because they have always been holy. Sinners can be justified only by offering a sufficient excuse for their sins, or a sufficient reason why they should be forgiven, and not punished as they deserve.

Men usually attempt to *justify themselves*. Adam did so when he said, The woman thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. Eve did the same when she said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. But their excuses availed nothing. So the excuses of others avail nothing. Some attempt to throw the blame back on our first parents, because if they had not sinned their posterity would have been holy; or, on God, because He so constituted them that they sinned in consequence of the fall. Others attempt to throw the blame still further back on the foreknowledge and eternal decrees of God, as though these made them sinners. These excuses have been offered more than any others, and they are the most plausible that can be conceived, yet will not avail with God, and are not really satisfactory to those who urge them; because they know that sin is *entirely voluntary*, they are conscious that neither the foreknowledge of God, nor His eternal decrees, nor their corrupt nature derived from Adam, nor the temptations of the world and the devil, have ever *compelled* them to sin *contrary to their own choice*. The Bible, it is true, speaks of God's foreknowledge as extending to every

thing, and of sin as the consequence of the fall and temptations, but it never mentions them as excuses for sin. Besides they never accept of such excuses from others. Who ever heard of any one forgiving an injury because the foreknowledge of God, or His eternal decree, or the sin of Adam, made the injury necessary, so that the person who did it is not responsible, and should not be punished for it? Who ever heard such reasons given by a judge for acquitting thieves and murderers? Why do men build prisons and confine criminals in them if they believe that such excuses for sin are sufficient to justify them? It is not safe, then, to rely on them or any others. When sinners shall stand before their righteous Judge they will be speechless.

Another common method of self-justification is *good works*. It seems to be assumed that one good deed must atone for many sins, and it is often easy for one to strike the balance in his own favor, provided the examination is not very strict, by considering his sins few and trifling, and his good deeds many and great. But the difficulty consists in making one's estimate of himself agree with the standard by which God judges him. It is written: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." This evidently means that a life of perfect holiness in other respects would not atone for one sin. This principle, too, is considered just in human governments. Though a person may have been a good and useful citizen many years, if he once steals or commits murder, he is ever afterwards a

criminal. His past life does not justify him for theft or murder in a single instance, nor can his future life, though ever so good. Much less can sinners justify themselves. None have kept the whole law and offended only in one point, and none will be perfectly holy the rest of their lifetime. "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them."

A religious life of some kind is much relied on for self-justification. The idea has probably been derived from Divine authority, though grossly perverted and misapplied. Sacrifices were early required, and various rites and ceremonies were afterwards instituted by Divine appointment to impress on the minds of men the need of something to render them acceptable to God. These, or other forms of religious worship, have been widely substituted for what they signified. In heathen countries religion has degenerated into sacrifices offered to idols. Even where the true God is worshiped there are multitudes having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. The more strict persons are in their religious observances the more they are apt to think themselves justified. Much reading of the Bible, many prayers and confessions, frequent fasting, regular attendance on public worship, being baptized and partaking of the Lord's Supper, many think will make them acceptable to God. Such religious duties are required, indeed, but not as the means of justification. As such they avail nothing.

“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I delight not in the blood of lambs or of he goats. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. And when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you, and when ye make many prayers I will not hear.” “How should man be just with God?”

THE PLEA FOR JUSTICE.

Despairing of self-justification, many urge the plea for justice on the part of God. They think they have already suffered as much as, or more than they deserve, and that it is time to be released from the penalty of sin. Or they flatter themselves with the idea that what they suffer in this world must certainly be sufficient, and that death will be the end of their punishment, as though sin pertained to the body and not to the soul. Some apprehending that justice may not be so easily appeased, and perceiving that there are many wrongs which are not rectified in the present life, extend the period of retribution beyond time, but to a limited period. They think they *know* what is just as well as God, and expect to suffer all that justice demands without asking for mercy.

We shall only remark here, that most persons are not satisfied with this plea, and are not willing to suffer as much as they feel they deserve, but are hoping for mercy. It is difficult, too, to prove from the Scriptures that the punishment of sinners is lim

ited to the present life, or in its duration after death. The common impression derived from the language used is, that it will be endless.

THE PLEA FOR MERCY ALONE.

A great many rely on the mercy of God alone to save them. Their plea is that a Being of infinite mercy will not punish sinners as they deserve, but only afflict them enough to bring them sooner or later to repentance. They say, Our Heavenly Father is not less kind than earthly parents, who are not accustomed to be strictly just in their treatment of their children. Because earthly parents are imperfectly just, they infer God is. But it has been already proved, and the Bible plainly teaches, that He is *perfectly just*.

THE PLEA FOR JUSTICE IN PART AND MERCY IN PART.

Not being satisfied that justice alone, or mercy alone will save them, some rely partly on both. Since justice and mercy seem to conflict, they must be harmonized by as little punishment as possible, and afterwards a heavenly reward. This might seem consistent with human justice and mercy, but not with either the infinite justice or the infinite mercy of God. It is plainly, also, a human theory rather than a truth of the Bible.

THE ATONEMENT.

AN *atonement* is any satisfaction rendered for an injury. THE ATONEMENT referred to in the Bible is the satisfaction made by the sufferings and death of Christ for the sins of men. We learn that it was the purpose of God, in connection with the permission of sin, to provide a Saviour for sinners. This was first intimated in the curse pronounced upon the serpent with reference to the seed of the woman. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. It was foreshadowed by the sacrifices offered soon after the fall, as when Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; also in the tabernacle and temple, particularly when the high priests went into the holy places once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people. "How much more," it is written, "shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

The *necessity* of an atonement, or something to satisfy the claims of justice before sinners shall be forgiven, has been impressed on their minds in all ages. Hence originated costly sacrifices and self-inflicted tortures among the heathen, also penances and ascetic modes of life where a corrupt Christianity has prevailed. The impression has arisen from a sense of God's ab-

horrence of sin, as though His wrath needed to be appeased like the wrath of an injured or insulted man. The Scriptures, also, using language adapted to human ideas, represent God as angry with the wicked every day. Yet it should seem that there is in Him no such anger or wrath to be appeased as men feel; but as they in anger are disposed to inflict suffering on others, so God shows His abhorrence of sin by punishing the guilty, and the necessity of the atonement arose from the necessity of His connecting suffering with sin to enforce His law, or to guard holy beings against sin, and, if possible, to bring sinners to repentance.

It is a principle of justice, that *when the proper design of punishment has been fulfilled, the punishment itself may be remitted*. This has been illustrated, though imperfectly, by a remarkable instance in history. An ancient king made a law against adultery, the penalty being the loss of both eyes. The king's son was the first offender. The kind father, yet just ruler, to save his son from the loss of both his eyes, put out one of his own eyes and only one of his son's eyes. He thus proved himself both just and merciful. So Christ suffered for sinners. His blood shed for the remission of sins, fulfils the design of punishment in respect to all who believe in Him as their Saviour. It shows God's abhorrence of sin, and thus inspires the fear of committing it no less than their just punishment would. At the same time it so exhibits the mercy of God that it constrains many to repent of sin and seek after holiness.

That there is such efficacy in the atonement of Christ will appear if we consider Him as the Son of God and Himself God, which has been already proved. Apart from this His atonement would have been of no avail. "The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin." No more could the blood of Christ if He had been only a man or a created being ever so superior to man. Unless He is God as well as man, His sufferings and death displayed neither the justice nor the mercy of God. Accordingly, those who deny the divinity of Christ usually deny His atonement for sin and the necessity of it. It is, therefore, an essential truth of the Gospel that Christ is God as well as man. As such, His sufferings and death on the Cross, his blood shed on Calvary, presents the most amazing spectacle that has ever been witnessed—God, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, the Lamb of God slain for the sins of men. Such an atonement should seem sufficient, for it must be efficacious in proportion to the dignity and exalted rank of the sufferer. It is, therefore, infinite.

What a severe trial was it for Abraham to sacrifice, as he was ready to do in obedience to the command of God, his only son Isaac, whom he loved! Think how he must have felt when he was plainly commanded to do it, also while preparing for the sacrifice, and during the sad three days' journey to the place where it was to be offered, and, finally, when he came to the place which God had told him of and built the altar, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac and laid him on the altar upon the wood, and

stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. How *hard* to sacrifice his only son whom he loved!—*harder*, because Isaac, as it seems, was so submissive to his father and the will of God that he consented to be thus sacrificed. *God would not permit it.* “The angel of the Lord cried unto him, saying, Lay not thine hand on the lad.” *Yet God spared not His own Son.* On that same mount He delivered Him up to be slain as a sacrifice for the sins of men, and the Son of God voluntarily shed His blood for the redemption of sinners. Such a sacrifice should seem to be as much greater than Abraham was about to offer, as God the Father and the Son is superior to men. Hence if it had been possible to save sinners without it, would not the Father have heard His Son when He prayed, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me?”—or would the Son have added to His prayer, Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt? It should be considered, also, that the death of Christ had been preceded by His humiliation in laying aside the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and becoming a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

“Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” Is it said that God is too merciful to punish sinners as they deserve, or that they do not deserve more severe punishment than all must suffer? We point to the Son of God, bleeding on the Cross, for proof that the penalty of sin is certain and inconceivably dreadful. Is it said that God is unmerciful? Again we point to Christ

on the Cross for proof that His mercy is *infinite*: “God *so loved* the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” “Herein is *love*, not that we loved God, but He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” “God commendeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” Such truths of the Gospel may seem to some as an idle tale or a pleasing fiction; to the Jews they were a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

In respect to all true believers in Christ, His atonement is even more efficacious than their own punishment would be. It inspires them with the fear of God’s justice as well as with hope in His mercy, and thus guards them against sin, while it constrains them to live henceforth not unto themselves but unto Him who died for them, and rose again. Hence the proper design of their punishment being fulfilled, their faith may be and is properly accepted for it, so that they are forgiven and saved. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Of course, unbelievers not being affected by Christ’s atonement for sin cannot properly partake of its benefits, and their guilt is greatly aggravated by their rejection of Him as their Saviour. “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

The *extent* of the atonement has been much disputed, some considering it *limited* and others *unlimited*. There is less difference, probably, in the meaning than in the impression conveyed to different minds by these terms. Those who preach a limited atonement only mean that it is limited in its application, which they infer from the fact that all are not saved. Those who preach an unlimited atonement admit that many are not saved by it, but believe that all might be. The impression made on the minds of hearers depends much on their habits of thinking and their religious education; but we think the Bible commonly conveys the impression that the atonement is *unlimited*, that it is *sufficient* and *really designed* for all, whether finally saved or lost. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the *whole world*." "Who gave Himself a ransom for *all*." "We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for *every man*."

CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

The ancient high priest who typified Christ, after offering a sacrifice consisting of the blood of bulls and goats to atone for his own sins and the sins of the people, entered into the holiest of all in the tabernacle or temple to make intercession: so Christ, it is written, "having appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, has entered not into the holiest place made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to

appear in the presence of God for us." "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Such intercession seems to be regarded by many as of little consequence, yet without it the atonement would be of no avail, since none would seek and secure the blessings it procured.

The need of Christ's intercession appears partly from the holiness and justice of God, and partly from the sense of sinfulness and unworthiness which men feel when they are truly convicted of sin. A governor of a state cannot consistently receive a petition from any criminal for his release from imprisonment. A petition, to have any weight, must come from some one who is himself innocent and highly respectable. Hence, whenever a criminal attempts to procure pardon he does not send a petition from himself alone, but requests others to intercede for him. If, too, he might go directly to the governor for pardon he would naturally prefer that some one would act as his intercessor. Much more should it seem that God, as an infinitely holy and just Being, cannot consistently pardon sinners without a worthy intercessor. "If one man sin against another the judge shall judge him, but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" "He is not a man as I am that I should answer him, and we should come together into judgment. Neither is there any days-

man betwixt us that might lay his hands on us both.” When the law was given by Moses on Sinai, and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and the noise of a trumpet, the people stood afar off and said to Moses, speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die; so every sinner who realizes in any degree the holiness of God and his own sinfulness will naturally feel his need of an intercessor to plead with God in his behalf. The ancient people of God, also, were not permitted to approach Him without a high priest. At the same time his intercession was evidently of no avail except as typical of Christ’s. As the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, so the intercession of the high priest could not of itself be of any avail. None who are properly impressed with the holiness of God and their own sinfulness would be encouraged to seek God’s forgiveness without faith in Christ as their Intercessor. They could not have boldness to enter into the holiest, if they had not a high priest over the house of God who ever liveth to make intercession for them. But through Christ they may come boldly to the throne of grace that they may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. We should not suppose, indeed, that his intercession is needed to change the feelings of God and dispose Him to be merciful. He is merciful without reference to either the atonement or the intercession of Christ, yet He cannot consistently accept of sinners till they believe and trust in Christ—not only as having atoned for their sins by

His sufferings and death, but also as risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, where He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

One respect in which Christ intercedes for sinners is by prayer. He began on earth to intercede thus for His disciples. He prayed, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one even as we are. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be where I am that they may behold my glory." He said to Peter, "Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." The earth, however, was not the place where it was designed He should make intercession. Here He made an atonement and then entered into the holiest, heaven, where He ever liveth to make intercession; and as He prayed for His disciples on earth, so it should seem He still prays for them, exalted at God's right hand.

Another respect in which Christ intercedes for those who trust in Him is, doubtless, by pleading the efficacy of His atonement, presenting, as it were, His blood shed for the remission of sins, also by pleading the promise of the Father, to save all who shall trust in Him as their Saviour. Even His presence in the midst of the throne as the Lamb that hath been slain for sinners is sufficient to inspire believers with the hope of pardon and eternal life.

How much superior is such an Intercessor to any other. The Jewish high priest was only a man, and needed an intercessor for himself. How irrational, also, is the idea, that the Virgin Mary and departed saints, the priests of the Roman Catholic church, or the Pope, can intercede for sinners. There is a sense, indeed, in which it is proper, that we should ask Christians to pray for us, and God has promised to answer their prayers if offered in faith, yet it is only through Christ that they can prevail with God, and there is no reason to believe that any saints in heaven can hear us if we ask them to pray for us. "But if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "Christ is not entered into the holiest places made with hands which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear before God for us." "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us."

It appears from passages of Scripture already cited, that Christ properly intercedes only for those who either believe or shall believe in Him as their Saviour. He prayed for His disciples, those whom the Father had given Him: "I pray for them," he said; "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine." The atonement was made for all, but as there can be no salvation so there is no intercession for the impenitent and unbelieving, except, so far, as there is reason to expect that they will, sooner or later, repent and

believe. The sacrifices offered in the temple and the intercession of the high priest in the holiest place, pre-supposed repentance on the part of the people, otherwise they were of no avail; so Christ's atonement for sin can be of no avail to the impenitent, and He will not intercede for them except such as may be led by the Holy Spirit to trust in Him for salvation and eternal life. He is able to save them to the uttermost that *come to God by Him*, but since there are many who will never do this, there are many for whom He does not intercede. "Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way, and having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." "Seeing that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly to the Throne of Grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST FREE TO ALL.

When Christ, having made an atonement for sin, was about to ascend into heaven, He commanded His disciples, saying: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to *every creature*. The Gospel is

good tidings of great joy. It offers salvation to all. Its message is, "Come unto me, *all* ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "If *any* man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "The spirit and the bride say, *Come*. And let him that heareth say, *Come*. And let him that is athirst *come*. And *whosoever will*, let him take the water of life *freely*."

Doubts have been expressed whether the offer of salvation to all is *sincere*; as though God could be insincere; as though He could mock sinners with a gracious invitation addressed to all, but really intended for a part. We should not dare to doubt His sincerity. Since Christ was willing to suffer and die on the Cross to save sinners, why should we doubt His willingness to save all?—or His sincerity in offering salvation to all? The principal reasons assigned for such doubts are His foreknowledge that all would not accept the offer of salvation, and His eternal purpose to save only those who He foreknew would accept it; but if His foreknowledge or His eternal purpose *really and necessarily prevent* any from accepting salvation, then He has intentionally deceived us, and we should doubt His *word*, and give up our *confidence in the Bible*. Until, however, we know more about His foreknowledge and eternal purposes than He has plainly revealed to us, we have no right to infer from them that He is insincere in offering salvation to all, and we should not dare to think it. It is a *temptation of the devil*. God often means *more* than our language, which He uses,

expresses, but never *less*. Salvation, through Christ, is *free to all*.

ELECTION.

[*Remark.* The Apostle Peter wrote respecting the Epistles of the Apostle Paul: "In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest as they do also the other scriptures to their own destruction." It is not implied that the things referred to are not true, but that they are. A truth hard to be understood may be plainly taught, and if so, ought to be believed though it may not be clearly understood. It is reasonable, however, to infer that such truths are *not essential to salvation*, though they are, doubtless, important, otherwise they would not have been revealed. Those who study them most, understand them best, and believe them most implicitly, are apt to be pillars in the church, itself the pillar and ground of the truth. It is well, therefore to study them, and understand them as fully as possible; but if we cannot understand them, if we cannot explain them satisfactorily to ourselves or others, let us be careful not to wrest them to our destruction. We should rather think that such truths do not particularly concern us, and give heed to what we can and do understand. It is remarkable, too, that those who do wrest such truths to their own destruction are persons who do not believe them, but stumble over false inferences from truths which they dispute].

Among the truths hard to be understood is *Election*.

To *elect* is to choose one and not another. *Election* is the choice of one and not another. The *elect* are the persons chosen. In the Scriptures the elect, in most instances, are persons chosen to salvation as in the following passages: "Shall not God avenge his own *elect*?" "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's *elect*?" "Put on as the *elect* of God bowels of mercies." "*Elect* according to the foreknowledge of God." Their election is referred to in the following passages: "Even so at this present time also there is a remnant according to the *election* of grace." "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh after, but the *election* hath obtained it and the rest were blinded." "Knowing, brethren beloved, your *election* of God." "Wherefore give all diligence to make your calling and *election* sure."

It can scarcely be denied that these passages of Scripture teach the *election* of some and not others to salvation. Many complain of this, but why should they complain? They have the offer of salvation, which they may accept if they choose. The election of others does not hinder them. In this respect it is not like the election of a president or governor, when if one is elected another cannot be. All may be saved. If any persons could certainly know that they are not elected it would not prevent their salvation if they would accept it, nor make it impossible for them to accept it. Nothing hinders them except their own choice, and nothing prevents their choice of salvation except their own sinfulness. It depends properly not on their election or non-election whether

they will be saved or not, but only on their own choice. The Bible does not say whosoever is *elected*, but whosoever *will*, let him take the water of life freely. Hence if a person is really willing to accept salvation he has accepted it, and made his election sure. If he is not willing to accept it, he certainly has no reason to complain, though there may be reason to fear he is not elected to be saved.

But it may be objected that the election is past, and the case of each person is decided. We believe it so far as God is concerned, for His purposes are eternal, like Himself, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He did not need to wait to know what He or men would do. Yet His purposes respecting each one are the same that they would have been if He had waited till now or the end of time. Nothing unforeseen will ever occur that would have changed them. Furthermore, it is as certainly His eternal purpose that each one should choose or refuse salvation without *constraint*, *compulsion*, or *necessity*, as that some should be saved, and others be left to perish. It may be difficult for us to understand *how* this can be, or *why* it should be, but it is not difficult to understand that it is taught in the Word of God, and, therefore, must be true. Each one may and will make his own election or non-election sure as he chooses.

It should seem, indeed, that election has much to do in determining each person's choice of salvation or of final condemnation. The choice and welfare of persons for both time and eternity are intimately

connected with the circumstances in which they live and the influences with which they are surrounded. It makes a vast difference whether they were born in a heathen or a Christian country, in a religious or irreligious community, in a pious family or in one addicted to profanity, and in which the god of this world is worshiped. Much, also, depends on the natural bias and disposition, the strength of the appetites and passions, the habit of self-restraint and self-control. He who foresees all the circumstances and foreknows all the influences, also how they will naturally affect the mind and heart of any person, must also foreknow what His choice will be, not only in respect to salvation but every thing else subject to His choice. It should seem, too, that He who arranges all circumstances and controls all influences, does *really*, though not *directly* or *efficiently*, control and determine each person's choice of good or evil. He is in no respects responsible for the choice itself. For that, only the person who exercises it is responsible. God may, for some wise and good purpose, permit bad influences to be exerted, but He never exerts them. On the contrary, He exerts, and causes to be exerted, a great variety of good and powerful influences which ought always to prevail and often do prevail. Thus He elects some to salvation and not others. He permits some to refuse it and perish in their sins. These He evidently has not elected, though, As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Others He leads, by the influence of His spirit and grace, to

accept salvation. These He has elected. **They are** His chosen people.

Still it is often objected that, if God elects some and not others, he is *partial*. But partiality so far as it is wrong, is favoring one more than another without sufficient reasons, and since God has sufficient reasons, doubtless, though unknown to us, for electing some and not others, we have no right to accuse him of undue partiality. Besides there is no more partiality in election by grace, than salvation by grace, and it is admitted that he saves some and not others. It should seem, too, that he often does more to save the non-elect than the elect. He evidently did much more to save the Jews who rejected the Saviour, than he did for the Gentiles who gladly received the word of God. And frequently persons instructed under Christian influences are never saved, while many who have seldom heard the Gospel, have become interested in the great salvation.

Again, it should be considered that election is no more applicable to salvation than it is to every condition of life. God elects some and not others to live a long life, to become rich, or to fill stations of honor and high trust. If a person, therefore, neglects salvation for the reason often assigned, "If I am elected I shall certainly be saved; and if not elected whatever I might do would be of no use; then let him be consistent, and neither eat, nor do anything because God foreknows and has pre-ordained whatsoever will be, long life or an early death, riches or poverty, honor or disgrace, and his own efforts can

avail nothing. Till he is ready to apply the truth in this way to practical life, let him not wrest it to his own destruction.

Whether, therefore, it is hard to understand it or not, it should seem to be true, "God has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." The same truths are are a savor of life unto life to some, and a savor of death unto death to others.

THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THOUGH Christ made an atonement for all and salvation is freely offered to all, this alone would not have secured the salvation of any one. There can be no salvation in sin, but only from it. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," and since none naturally possess it, they must obtain it before they can be fitted for heaven.

This change from sinfulness to holiness is the appropriate work of the Holy Spirit. Men do not naturally become holy, but increase in sinfulness. Their condition without the influences of the Holy Spirit, is fitly compared in a vision of the prophet Ezekiel, to a valley of dry bones, very many and very dry. Being asked, Can these bones live? he replied, O Lord, thou knowest. Afterwards, when he prophesied there was a noise and behold a shaking, and the bones came together bone to his bone, and lo! the sinews and the flesh covered them, but there was no breath in them. When, however, he said, "Come, O breath, breathe upon these slain that they may live," the breath came into them, and they stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. This refers to the great and wonderful change that is often effected by the Holy Spirit accompanying the preaching of the Gospel. Sinners are awakened from death-like stupidity, and begin to aspire after

holiness. Some are quickened into spiritual life, and begin to breathe the spirit of holiness. Even before Christ all true piety was the fruit of the Spirit, and the wicked resisted his influences, as may be inferred from the passages of Scripture in their connection, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," and "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." The gift of the Holy Spirit was included in the blessings of salvation bestowed on men through the promised Messiah. But since his coming there has been a special outpouring of the Spirit as predicted by the prophets, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." "It is expedient for you that I go away," said Christ to his disciples, "for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him to you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. And he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have spoken unto you." On the day of Pentecost the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, and three thousand were converted. For a time miracles were wrought through the Holy Spirit, till abundant proofs of the truths preached had been given, and ever since his power has been exerted in the conversion of sinners, and the sanctification of Christians. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God." "The Spirit also helpeth our

infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Such influences of the Holy Spirit, there is reason to believe, are exerted more or less uniformly; but there are seasons when they are exerted in a special manner, as in revivals of religion, when the minds of men are deeply impressed with religious truths, and many are led to commence a life of true holiness. It might seem indeed that the truths of the Gospel are themselves fitted to produce such effects, yet they are often preached a long time without them, and are apt to be perverted and corrupted, except when they are accompanied with the special influences of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The changes often effected in individuals and in communities, as clearly indicate the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, as the sound and effects of wind indicate its direction and force. What rendered the preaching of the gospel by the apostles so much more powerful than the most faithful and eloquent preaching has often been? Who taught Luther the doctrines of the Reformation, and what made them powerful enough to shake the thrones of kings, and finally overthrow the Papal power? What is it that often arrests the attention of the careless and irreligious,

the worldly and ambitious, and even infidels and scoffers, and so impresses them with the truths of the Gospel, that not only individuals but entire communities anxiously inquire the way of life, and earnestly seek salvation through Christ? "Quench not the Spirit." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

The influences of the Holy Spirit are chiefly exerted in answer to prayer. "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask him." Though the Spirit himself begets and cherishes the spirit of prayer whenever it prevails, He exerts his influences more or less as they are sought by earnest prayer. When prayer is neglected His influences are more or less withdrawn, but when the spirit of prayer prevails, this itself indicates the presence of the Holy Spirit, and there are, or soon will be other evidences of his power, which will be considered more particularly in connection with regeneration and sanctification.

REGENERATION.

The change from entire sinfulness to holiness is often called *regeneration*; *being born again*; the *new birth*; because Christ referred to it in his conversation with Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye

must be born again." The same change is referred to in the Old Testament as when God says, "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." The apostle Paul also refers to it in the following passages: "God according to his mercy saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." "And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he *quickened* together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

The *reality* of regeneration cannot be doubted without doubting the word of God just cited. There are, also, a great many persons in every Christian community who have solemnly professed before God and in public its reality in themselves. Their testimony also accords with the testimony of Christians in all past time. Many of them may be insincere, and more self-deceived, but the testimony of so many intelligent and honest persons should not be doubted. Besides, though many belie their profession by their unchristian lives, and all are more or less inconsistent, a great many exhibit a new spirit in their daily life, and it can be seen if any are disposed to see it, that there is a difference between those who serve God and those who serve him not.

A remarkable instance of the reality of the change referred to is that of the apostle Paul. He had been a bitter opposer of Christ, engaged in persecuting Christians, but suddenly became a zealous Christian himself, and an earnest preacher of the Gospel he had despised. He renounced the highest honors, and

suffered the loss of all things, that he might serve Christ. Could there have been such a change in his life without an essential change in his mind and heart?

The *Author* of regeneration is God, the Holy Spirit. This is plainly taught in the expressions "born of the *Spirit*," the "renewing of the *Holy Ghost*." None are naturally inclined to effect such a change in themselves, but rather to resist the influences of the Spirit; and those who have experienced it are apt to be deeply impressed with the conviction that it was effected by a higher power than their own, or that of any one who may have been instrumental in effecting it. Some simple truth may have been the means employed, but that long known and often repeated was powerless till accompanied with the influences of the Spirit. "Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Yet *man is active* in his regeneration. He thinks, feels, and acts, as though the work was chiefly his own. No one should wait for the change to be effected in himself without changing immediately his own habits of thought and feeling, and the controlling purpose of his life, as well as refraining from evil, and doing good. As the man with a withered hand was healed when he attempted to stretch it forth, so God works in men to will and to do of his own good pleasure, when they begin to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Sometimes, it is true, he seems to renew men without any previous or ac-

companying efforts of their own, but usually by prompting and aiding earnest efforts, so that as soon as a person really decides to be a Christian, he is a Christian.

Regeneration is naturally preceded by what is called *conviction of sin* accompanied with religious seriousness. This is often gradual, beginning in childhood and becoming more and more habitual till it matures into spiritual life. More commonly, perhaps, it occurs at intervals, after seasons of carelessness and stupidity in sin, as in revivals of religion. Sometimes it flashes suddenly on the mind, and overwhelms the sinner with a consciousness of awful guilt, so that he tremblingly asks, What must I do to be saved? Thus the Holy Spirit reproves men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Such conviction is not necessarily distressing or protracted, provided it leads the soul to holiness and to God. This may be done in a few moments, as in a case just come to our notice. An irreligious man, addicted to horse-racing, was returning home from a race, and became so convicted of his guilt, that in a few moments he fully resolved to become a Christian, as his subsequent life proved him to be.

Regeneration itself is *instantaneous*. The preparation for it may be more or less gradual, and it may be considerable time before the evidences of it are noticed or the consciousness of it felt. The particular time may not be known, not even the day or the week. But there is some particular moment when the new birth begins, the new life commences, though the

consciousness that "old things are passed away; behold all things are become new," may not be felt till some time afterwards, and may never be very distinct.

The *evidences* of regeneration are the fruits of holiness in the heart and life; the love of God, the love of Christ constraining us to live, henceforth, not unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us and rose again, and purer love to others than is natural, disposing us to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute us. They include also repentance for sin as displeasing and dishonoring to God, faith in Christ as our only Saviour, a spirit of prayer, an interest in religious worship and the cause of Christ, fidelity and zeal in discharging known duties, accompanied with earnest efforts to save others.

The *necessity* of regeneration is, also, plainly taught in the passages of Scripture which have been cited and others. There are, also, various considerations fitted to impress it on our minds.

One such consideration is that *none are naturally fitted for heaven*. The presence of God would not make men happy in their natural state. To think of him as he is revealed in the Bible rightly understood is disagreeable to them. Religion, which consists in loving and obeying him, is irksome. How then could they enjoy his presence? It would overwhelm them with a sense of their guilt and shame. They would gladly flee from him, and hide from his presence. As, too, they are least happy now in the com-

pany of the pious, and do not enjoy religious conversation, nor take satisfaction and delight in religious duties ; so the society and employments of holy angels, and the redeemed in heaven, would be not only disagreeable, but annoying to them. The best men would not naturally relish the pleasures at God's right hand ; they would so much prefer earthly pleasures, the same that they now enjoy most. Until the soul is new-born, not one of the human family could sing the songs of heaven ; not one could sing, " Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth ;" not one could unite in saying, " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing ;" not one could do the will of God as it is done in heaven. Among men what discord and strife, pride and envy, hatred and cruelty prevail ? and oh ! there would be such feelings and passions in heaven to destroy its peace and extinguish its joy, were it not for the unalterable decree of Him who hath the keys of heaven and hell, " Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is this righteous purpose of Him who liveth forever and ever, that makes heaven the seat of everlasting peace and blessedness.

Nor do men naturally *become* fitted for heaven. Children do not naturally grow better as they grow older. Profligate youth do not naturally become virtuous and good men. The vicious and degraded do not naturally become virtuous and refined. Even the moral and virtuous do not naturally love God, or

relish religious truths and duties more and more as they advance in life. Much is said about human progress, and in many respects it has been very great. In the arts and sciences, in civilization and refinement, and perhaps it should be added in morality and virtue, men are constantly improving, though even such progress is due chiefly to the influences of the Christian religion. But how much progress do men naturally make in true holiness, in fitness for heaven? None at all. They naturally increase in sinfulness instead of holiness. They are naturally better fitted for heaven when they are little children than at any other period of life, and the longer they live without being born again, or being renewed by the Holy Spirit, the less fitted for heaven they become. Of little children, not old men and women, Christ said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." All are more or less conscious of this fact, or would be if they reflected properly on the state of their minds and hearts, and what constitutes fitness for heaven. Very few need such a change less than Nicodemus, to whom Christ said, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

The *means* of regeneration are chiefly the truths of the Gospel. "The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit." "The Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The truth is the instrument which the Holy Spirit uses in convincing men

of sin, renewing their hearts and leading them to holiness and to God. On this therefore we should chiefly rely to effect such a change in ourselves, or in others. Other means of grace, such as reading the Bible and religious books, and attending public worship, are useful only as they are fitted to impress the truths of the Gospel on the mind. Nor are these rightly used if they do not properly affect and influence us. We only abuse the means of grace whenever we use them without being renewed in the spirit of our minds. As soon as we bring ourselves under the influence of the truth, by giving it due and earnest attention, praying for the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Spirit, it will not be long before the new life will begin in our souls, as it is not long after the earth is warmed with the rays of the sun, and is abundantly watered with showers, before its winter's dreariness is gone, and it becomes clothed with life and beauty. Especially "Quench not the Spirit." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

The first holy exercises of the regenerated are chiefly *faith, repentance, love, and submission*, all exercised towards God. Which of these is first exercised it is difficult if not impossible to tell. One person would say that he first exercised faith, another repentance, another love, and another submission, accordingly as he first became conscious of feeling one or another. It seems that, in reality, they must all be exercised together as a complex act of the mind.

There is no faith without repentance, no repentance without love, and no love without submission. Yet there seems to be a reason for considering faith as first in the order of nature, though not of time, since it seems to inspire the others while it is itself strengthened and increased by them.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

FAITH.

CHRISTIAN FAITH is believing in God, particularly as revealed in Christ. As children naturally have faith in their parents, so Christians, the children of God, have faith in Him, believing His Word, or the truths He has revealed in the Bible. In this respect it is essentially different from believing a particular creed expressing one's religious opinions, or believing what parents teach and ministers preach, which may be faith in a creed, or faith in parents and ministers, but not faith in God. Since, as has been proved, the Bible is the Word of God, it must be our rule of faith. So far as any one disbelieves the truths of the Bible or perverts their meaning to make them accord with his own pre-conceived opinions, he errs from the faith. No one's faith, indeed, can be expected to be perfect in this world, but the Bible is, for the most part, so plain, that our faith may be *essentially* right.

Christian faith is something *more* than a common belief of the Bible. There are a great many whose religious creed is as perfect as any, who have not a particle of Christian faith. They are familiar with the Word of God, and believe all its essential truths as they are commonly believed, yet are really unbelievers. "The natural man *receiveth not* the things

of the Spirit of God, for they are *foolishness* unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "In whom the god of this world hath *blinded* the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." This is apt to seem fanciful, but it is the language of the Scriptures, and certainly true. What men commonly believe is no more like the reality than darkness is like light, or a dead body is like a living one.

A blind person may learn much about light and colors; that there is a difference between light and darkness; that the grass is green, the sky blue, some things are white and others black; but he has, and can have no true conception of light and colors or any visible objects. A dead body may have the form of a living one, but it has no life. So men may naturally have the form of godliness without its power. They may believe all the truths of the Gospel so far as language conveys an idea of them to their minds, but their impressions of what they believe are naturally as different from the truth itself as death from life. Their faith is dead. It has no vitality in it. It is the body without the spirit.

But there are many in every Christian community who have learned by happy experience what faith is. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is this *light of the knowledge of*

the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ which makes the faith of all true Christians essentially different from that of others. What they believe, so far as language expresses it, is the same that others believe, but as it appears to their minds and effects their hearts, it is as different as light from darkness. They now realize that they were in the darkness of sin, but have become children of light; that they were dead in trespasses and sins, but have been made alive unto God through Jesus Christ.

Yet there is nothing mysterious in the faith of Christians. They believe the Gospel only as they believe other truths; yet it is no longer as an idle tale or a pleasing fiction, but a blessed and glorious reality. They had, perhaps, always believed the same truths as they supposed, but now they say they did not really believe them till it pleased God to make known to them, as the Apostle Paul says, what is the *riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in them the hope of glory*. Hence, though they were once careless and unconcerned in sin as others still are, they now say, "He brought me up out of an horrible pit and out of the miry clay, and set my feet on a rock, and established my goings, and He hath put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God." Once they did not believe, but now they believe that they were in the horrible pit and miry clay. Once they did not believe, but now they believe they needed to have their feet set on a rock. Their new song is inspired by *faith*.

It should be inferred, from the *nature* of the truths

taught in the Bible, that faith is something more than a common belief of them. Perhaps the distinction may be more clearly expressed by adding, that faith is *regarding* the truths believed as true, particularly as applicable to oneself, instead of disregarding them as commonly believed. If we should see a person sitting careless and unconcerned in a house on fire, after hearing the alarm often repeated, we should infer that he did not believe the alarm; or, if being alarmed he should attempt to escape through a thick wall instead of an open door, we should infer that he did not believe the door to be open. How, then, can impenitent sinners really believe that God hates sin, and will by no means clear the guilty; that He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, and then the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment; how can they believe such truths, yet be careless and unconcerned? How can they believe that Christ, the Son of God and Himself God, became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, was crucified for them, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is now exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins, yet feel no penitential sorrow for sin, nor the love of Christ constraining them, but continue to neglect so great salvation? How can they believe that the Gospel has brought life and immortality to light, yet live as though they had nothing to fear, nothing to hope for beyond the grave? It is *impossible*. It *cannot be* that they really believe the truths of the Gospel

while they so utterly disregard them. They certainly have *no faith in God*.

Faith is uniformly accompanied with appropriate effects. It works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world, and there is peace and joy in believing. Whoever believes that God is love must love Him. Such faith will subdue his natural enmity, and beget love as certainly as the summer's sun will melt the frost and ice of winter. Faith in Christ and His Cross, especially, must touch the heart, and make it overflow with penitential sorrow for sin, so that it will gradually become pure and holy. Faith, too, in the realities of eternity, heaven and hell, must be stronger than the love of the world. Being justified by faith is just what every one needs to give him peace with God; and believing in Christ as his Saviour, accompanied as it will be with the hope of everlasting life, is just what every one needs to fill him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Let none, therefore, think that they have faith unless they have *felt*, and continue to feel its life-giving power in their souls.

There is, then, a vast difference between believers and unbelievers, so-called in the Bible. There may not be in the judgment of some men, but there is in the judgment of God who searches the heart. It is true, the difference is sometimes scarcely perceptible to us, and it is never so great as it ought to be. "O ye of *little* faith," Christ still has occasion to say to His most faithful disciples. Yet little as their faith may be, they live by it. "The life which I now live

in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." We walk by faith and not by sight. By faith Enoch, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, and many others, of whom the world was not worthy, were distinguished as chosen of God. These, indeed, are remarkable examples, but essentially the same faith must be exhibited in the life of every Christian. Without it no one should think himself a Christian.

The *necessity* of faith, particularly faith in Christ, is plainly taught in the Bible. Many think it makes no difference what religious belief they adopt provided they are sincere; but it is written: "Without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Faith, therefore, is indispensable to salvation. It is, also, necessary as the means of repentance and sanctification. Without it none would ever become holy and fitted for heaven. None ever truly repent of sin, love God, and worship Him acceptably, till they have faith in God and Christ.

How may faith be exercised? might seem to be a question that needs no answer; for every one believes

many truths without asking how. Yet the question often arises in the minds of persons who are urged to believe in Christ as their Saviour, for though they naturally believe other truths as soon as they are convinced of them, it is *hard*, and they seem not to know how to believe the truths of the Gospel.

One important direction that may be given is, to regard faith itself as the gift of God, and to seek it by sincere and earnest prayer. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Faith, indeed, is a voluntary exercise, and each one *must exercise it himself, and ought to do so* immediately; yet no one ever believes till he is constrained to believe by the influences of the Holy Spirit enlightening his mind and guiding him in the way of truth. Hence, though we should never expect to have the gift of faith without attempting to exercise it, while we say, "Lord, I believe," it is proper that we should pray, "help thou mine unbelief;" and we may be assured that such a prayer, if sincere and earnest, will ere long be answered. "Ask, and ye shall receive."

Next: Faith requires earnest attention to the truths particularly required to be believed. "How can ye believe which receive honor one from another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" "The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Anything, too, even many religious truths, that engages the attention more

than such truths as need to be believed, will prevent the exercise of Christian faith. "Therefore we ought to give the *more earnest heed* to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." These truths, if we give them proper attention, will constrain our belief, so that we shall no sooner doubt their divine origin than that natural light comes from the sun, and shall rejoice to feel their saving influence.

Faith, also, requires immediate obedience to the known will of God. "If any man will do his will," said Christ, "he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Abraham's faith was accompanied with a readiness to obey the command of God, though it required him to sacrifice his son Isaac, whom he loved; but an unwillingness to discharge some particular duty requiring no sacrifice, and in itself very easy, deprives a great many of the peace and joy of believing. As soon as any are willing to discharge every known duty, they are apt to believe to the saving of their souls. It is, doubtless, faith that first disposes them to obey, but it is also a willingness to obey that disposes them to believe.

These few suggestions may not have answered very satisfactorily the question, How may faith be exercised?—yet let a person sincerely pray for the Spirit of God to give him faith, while he himself gives his earnest attention to such truths as he is required to believe, and faithfully endeavors to do the will of God, so far as he knows it, then, though he may be left awhile in darkness, it will not be long

before he shall walk in newness of life and rejoice in the light of truth.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

We have already partially considered the question, How should man be just with God? and shown that self-justification is impossible; also that justice without mercy, or mercy without justice, is inconsistent with the hope of forgiveness. On the other hand, we have considered the atonement of Christ as designed and sufficient to save all men. Yet in answer to the question, "Are there few that be saved, Christ said: "Strive to enter in at the straight gate, for many will seek to enter in and shall not be able."

Why, some will ask, since Christ died for all, will not all be saved? Because not even the atonement of Christ can save men in their sins. It could not have been designed for such a purpose, and Christ preached, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." So long, therefore, as any continue impenitent, they can have no rational hope of salvation.

Who, then, will be justified with God? He is the Righteous Judge of all, and any reason for the justification of sinners which satisfies Him ought to satisfy others, especially the guilty, whether it seems to them sufficient or not. Any condition of salvation which He proposes should be gladly accepted though ever so hard. How, then, can sinners be justified? By faith, by *believing in God*, particularly *God in Christ*. This would be incredible without His own authority; for it is

the same as requiring nothing, and offering salvation without money and without price. But we have His authority: "To him that worketh not but *believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly, his *faith* shall be counted for righteousness." "Therefore, we conclude, that a man is justified by *faith* without the deeds of the law." "Abraham *believed* God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and *believe in thine heart* that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." This should seem *plain* enough and *easy* enough; for believing that God so loved us, believing that Christ died for us, is as simple and as easy in itself as believing that a kind father and mother once toiled and suffered for us. On the other hand, as it would be the basest ingratitude on the part of a child not to be affected by parental kindness, so unbelief is properly represented as the greatest sin, that for which sinners chiefly are condemned. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the only begotten Son of God."

Besides, it should seem reasonable and even necessary that sinners should not be justified without faith. We have already considered the influence that faith exerts in purifying the heart and overcoming the world. Even the sufferings of an innocent lamb offered as a sacrifice for sin were fitted to affect the hearts of those for whom it was offered, how much more the sufferings and death of Christ!

But unbelief makes even the blood of Christ unavailing, so that without faith there is no true repentance, no true holiness. It is, therefore, impossible to be justified without faith, partly because it is impossible to be justified without holiness. Faith, too, is itself a holy exercise pleasing to God, as a child's faith is apt to be particularly pleasing to parents. It is also accompanied with other holy exercises and a holy life, so that as it increases holiness increases, and, finally, becomes perfect. Since, then, in one sense, as the Apostle James teaches, by works a man is justified and not by faith only; he must also be justified by faith, without which no works are ever holy or acceptable to God. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him."

In other respects, also, justification without faith would be the same as justification without an atonement, for unbelief, so far as it prevails, renders the atonement unavailing. The blood of Christ was shed for us in vain unless we believe it was shed for us. Only those whose faith gives utterance to sentiments like this:

"Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"

Are accustomed to respond:

"But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe:
Here, Lord, I give myself away—
'Tis all that can I do."

All that they can do is really nothing that merits the favor of God, yet it is a suitable reason why He should bestow the blessings of salvation on them instead of those who despise or neglect them. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit—a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Such a spirit or such a heart is not natural to any. It proceeds from faith, which, therefore, answers the question, How should man be just with God?

TRUST IN GOD.

Trust, or *confidence* in God, is closely allied to faith. Faith begets trust. Unbelievers trust chiefly in themselves. In their worldly plans and pursuits God's direction is not sought, and instead of depending on Him for success they rely on their own efforts. They know, indeed, that everything is uncertain, and they expect to risk much in every enterprise, but self-dependence is all their reliance. So in their spiritual concerns they trust in their own merits rather than in Christ. But Christians are wont to trust in a higher power than their own even in respect to their temporal interests, so that when they are successful they praise God for blessing their efforts, and when unsuccessful they believe it to be best they should be, while they are grateful for such favors as they receive. Especially in respect to their salvation and future happiness, while they are more careful than others to please God, they trust only in the merits of Christ, saying, "I know whom I have believed; and am persuaded that He is able to keep

that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

LOVE TO GOD.

Christ said to the Jews: "I know you that ye have not the love of God in you," though they thought they loved Him. So, as we have already proved, men do not naturally love God, though they think they do. They only love such a Being as they falsely imagine Him to be, not such as He is. True love to God is incited by the Holy Spirit. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." "The fruit of the Spirit is *love*." "Every one that loveth is born of God." True Christians feel that they *now* love God as they did not naturally.

Christian love to God is *pure*, though not perfect on earth. It is not prompted by supreme selfishness like that which they once called love, yet it is mingled with much selfishness, so that it is often difficult for themselves to know which holds the ascendancy in their hearts. But it is only when they feel assured that their love is supreme, and that they are habitually prompted and controlled by it, that they should think they are Christians, the adopted children of God, and heirs of salvation.

Love to God assumes different forms according to the different aspects in which He is contemplated. Sometimes it is *benevolence* or good-will towards Him, leading one to desire that He should be known and honored by all His creatures, as expressed in the petitions: "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in hea-

ven ;” also in the ascription : “ Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever.” Sometimes it is *complacency*, or supreme satisfaction and delight in God, as the portion of the soul prompting such exclamations as—“ O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory above the heavens !” “ Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.” At other times it is *gratitude* in view of His great goodness and the manifold blessings of His providence and grace, expressed by thanksgiving as—“ O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.” “ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.”

Apart from the feeling of love, of which a person may not always be conscious, because it is not strongly excited, there are abundant evidences of love to God whenever it is supreme. A Christian need not be troubled with doubts respecting his right to the privileges of God’s adopted children, because he does not always *feel* the love of God as he often does, as parents need not doubt the sincerity of their love to their children, though they sometimes seem to forget them. It should satisfy a person, if sometimes, instead of feeling love to God, he thinks of Him with satisfaction ; reads his Word with interest and a prayerful spirit, or finds it sweet to meditate on its truths ; delights in religious worship, rejoices in the prosperity of Christian churches apart from a particular denomination ; is interested

in the spread of the Gospel, or anxious for the conversion of sinners, and continues faithful in discharging various Christian duties. Especially may he feel assured that he loves God if he loves others who are devoted to His worship and service. "By this," said Christ, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another." The Apostle John also wrote: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

Love to God is also accompanied with purer love to all men than is naturally felt. Men naturally love those who love them, their relatives and particular friends. To some extent, also, they are naturally prompted by kindness, generosity, public spirit, patriotism, and philanthropy—but not so much that they are not supremely selfish. Perhaps, too, it should be admitted, that many persons, nurtured under Christian influences, have imbibed a spirit of good-will and brotherly love, which is much above the common selfishness of men, though they are not Christians; but if so, love to God cherishes a spirit much more like that of Christ, who suffered and died that He might save sinners, and prayed even for His enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

A Christian need not despair, indeed, though in these respects his love often seems languid, if he only holds fast to his profession and perseveres in struggling against temptation and sin. Let him not be discouraged, though he often fails and comes short of his duty, if he is really on the Lord's side, and

after every fall rises with renewed strength, and presses on till the conflict shall be over. Only let him be on his guard against the allurements of the world, the lusts of the flesh, and the great adversary of souls, *and keep himself in the love of God*, he shall at last find himself among his redeemed people.

REPENTANCE.

Repentance towards God is sorrow for sin as displeasing and dishonoring to Him, and forsaking it in the heart and life. Men naturally repent of some sins which destroy their own happiness or injure themselves. The intemperate sometimes reform and become sober, because they find that intemperance injures their health, and makes themselves and their families poor, degraded, and wretched. Thieves and murderers are apt to repent in some respects when they are detected and punished. Such repentance includes only the sorrow of the world that worketh death. "Godly sorrow," or sorrow for sin as committed against God, "worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of."

The *necessity* of repentance is obvious for the same reasons that regeneration is necessary. Sinners need to be born again, because they need to repent. The impenitent could not be happy in heaven if they could be admitted there. They would not relish the society and employments of holy beings. They would not enjoy the presence of God, whom they neither love nor are willing to obey. Nor can they be forgiven and welcomed

among holy beings. Christ preached, "*Repent* ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Except ye *repent* ye shall all likewise perish." "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to *repentance*."

But some say, "I can't repent." Then they must certainly perish. Many, however, have repented, and what some have done others can do. All can repent in the sense that makes all under obligations to do so, and takes away all excuses for impenitence. There is, indeed, a sense in which none can repent without the Spirit of God to lead them to repentance. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?—then may ye who are accustomed to do evil learn to do well." Yet surely being accustomed to do evil is no excuse for continuing to do it. Nor are any required to repent without the influences of the Holy Spirit. It would, doubtless, be useless to attempt it. The more such dependence is felt the better. But since all are dependent on God to give them repentance they should repent immediately. If they could expect to repent at any time it would be safer to defer it. But "*now* is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

The *means* of repentance are the same as the means of regeneration, chiefly the truths of the

Gospel. These the Holy Spirit uses in regeneration, and men should use them in exercising repentance. No one can repent by a mere volition or effort of his will, as he can raise his hand. An outward reformation may be effected, but the heart cannot be purified in this way. To feel truly penitent a person must reflect seriously and prayerfully on his sins as committed against God, and, at the same time, on the goodness of God as fitted to lead him to repentance, and especially on His mercy exhibited by the sufferings and death of Christ. Beholding the Lamb of God bleeding on the Cross, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ will make any one penitent. Unbelief hardens the heart, faith softens it, and makes the eyes overflow with tears.

The language of the penitent is, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin, for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight."

True repentance includes or leads to *conversion*, turning from sin to holiness, forsaking sin in the heart and life, and commencing a life of obedience and devotion to God. The change is not completed, but begins with repentance. In the heart, love to God reigns instead of enmity or indifference and ingratitude towards Him, and the spirit of goodwill and forgiveness instead of anger, revenge,

hatred, ill-will, and selfishness. Humility assumes the place of pride. The appetites and passions are restrained. Evil thoughts are no longer cherished, but whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, these chiefly occupy the thoughts. The affections are set on things above and not on things on the earth. In the outward life, especially, since it is more easy to reform that than the inward life, true repentance leads to a thorough reformation so far as any is needed. It will put an end to profanity, lying, fraud, intemperance, licentiousness, theft, murder, and all kindred vices and crimes, and lead to an upright, useful, and pious life.

HUMILITY.

Christian humility naturally accompanies repentance. There is much, indeed, that should make men humble apart from their sinfulness. They are lower than the angels, and even the angels are represented as veiling their faces before God, and as not clean in His sight. Much more should men say, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?—and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" Especially should every sinner feel, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." But even those who have not kept all the commandments from their youth up are naturally disposed to ask, "What lack I yet?"—and only the truly penitent pray like the publican, who standing

afar off would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

PRAYER.

One of the first indications that a person has become a Christian is a *spirit of prayer*. Others may pray more or less habitually, and at times sincerely and earnestly, but the spirit of prayer is wanting. The Apostle Paul commenced his Christian life with the prayer, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—and "Behold he prayeth," was the first proof given of his conversion. It appears, also, from his subsequent life, that earnest prayer, as well as supreme devotion to Christ, distinguished him as a Christian. The Bible, too, represents all truly pious persons or Christians as cherishing a spirit of prayer.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watch-word at the gate of death--
He enters heaven by prayer."

Prayer is a solemn address to God. According to the Assembly's Catechism it is an "offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of sins, and a thankful acknowledgment of His mercies." The most comprehensive and beautiful form of prayer is that which Christ taught His disciples:

"Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven. Give us this day

our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

Prayer is the *duty* of all men, for they should acknowledge their dependence on God for the various blessings they receive or need, and if they have right feelings and desires they will naturally express them to Him in some appropriate form of prayer. All are commanded and exhorted in the Scriptures to pray, and are so taught by the example of Christ and primitive Christians. It is generally admitted that Christians ought to pray, and if so, it must be the duty of all men, for they ought to be Christians. The prayers of the impenitent, indeed, cannot be acceptable to God, but their impenitence is no excuse for neglecting prayer, since they ought to repent immediately and begin to pray for forgiveness and other blessings. The feeling which prompts the question, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him?—or, What profit shall we have if we pray unto Him?"—should be regarded as most offensive to God.

Yet prayer should be considered more as a *privilege* than a duty. As a child would be sad and disconsolate if denied the privilege of asking his parents for various things, so Christians would be unhappy if they could not pray to their Heavenly Father. It is often a great relief to their minds to cast their cares on Him who careth for them,

and it greatly comforts them to tell Him their sorrows, even apart from the expectation that He will mingle them with the consolation and joy of His favor and blessing. Especially is prayer a privilege to Christians since it secures the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and thus lifts them above the world to hold sweet communion with God, to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. "It is good for me," the Psalmist says, "to draw near unto God."

Prayer is *useful and efficacious*. The chief objection urged against it is, that it must be fruitless since the purposes of God are eternal and fixed, so that whatever blessings He has determined to bestow on us we shall receive without praying for them, and we shall not receive others however much we may pray for them. But the same objection may, with equal propriety and force, be urged against all human efforts. They cannot change the purposes of God any more than prayer can. Therefore if we should not pray for the reason referred to we should not do anything. But God's purposes evidently include the means of accomplishing them, and prayer is the means of securing various blessings which would not be received without it. God has purposed to answer prayer as certainly as He has purposed anything pertaining to men.

Prayer is useful apart from its efficacy. If it did not prevail with God it would be a means of grace to men. Withdrawing the mind from worldly and sinful objects, and thinking of God as seeing and

hearing us, especially as of purer eyes than to behold evil, tends to elevate the mind and purify the heart and life.

Prayer is also efficacious. God hears prayer since He is omniscient, and it is reasonable to believe that He will be disposed to bless those who pray aright rather than those who neglect prayer. He promises to answer prayer: "Ask and it shall be given to you." "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." "Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear." There are, also, numerous instances related in the Bible in which prayer has been answered. Though, too, we cannot always infer that any particular blessings have been bestowed only in answer to prayer, those who are accustomed to pray much cannot doubt that their prayers are efficacious. "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much."

The appropriate *places* for prayer are in secret, in the family, and in public. As individuals, all should chiefly observe secret prayer. "When thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Those who pray acceptably pray most in secret.

"I love to steal awhile away
From every cumbering care,
And spend the hours of setting day
In humble, grateful prayer."

Since, also, every person at the head of a family should resolve like Joshua—"As for me and my house we will serve the Lord," he should not fail to pray habitually with his family, for this is an important part of family worship, and without it scarcely any form of godliness will ordinarily be observed. A prayerless family can scarcely claim to be religious, and where there is no family altar even secret prayer will in most cases be neglected. That it is a great sin to neglect family prayer should be inferred from the imprecation of the prophet Jeremiah, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name." Observation, also, shows that a faithful discharge of this duty is attended with God's richest blessings.

As social beings, too, living in the same community, and members of churches or religious societies, it is not only appropriate, but our duty, to unite with others, on various occasions, in social and public prayer. The disciples of Christ, after His resurrection and ascension, continued with one accord in prayer and supplication; and there is special encouragement for social prayer in Christ's promise, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

Of course, prayer to be acceptable to God must be *sincere*, and be accompanied with true repentance and faith in Christ. Earnest and importunate prayer will certainly be heard and answered. The prayer of faith often secures the particular blessing

implored, or if that be denied a blessing in another form is given. "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us, and if we know that He heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions desired of Him."

SUBMISSION, OBEDIENCE, AND CONSECRATION.

Submission to the will of God, *obedience* to His laws and precepts, and *consecration* to His services are so similar, that they may be considered together. To some extent, or in some respects, all men exercise them either from necessity or fear, but only Christians do so cheerfully. Parents must submit to God when He takes away a dear child by death, but all are not ready to say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth to Him good." "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." How few would be ready, like Abraham, to sacrifice an only son in obedience to the command of God! The trial, indeed, might be too severe for most true Christians, and God will not try them more than they are able to bear, yet it is such a spirit of obedience that distinguishes them in part from others.

Submission to God is often the first act of which a Christian, as such, is conscious, the first indication of the new life, and it generally has reference to some particular sin which must be abandoned, or some particular duty which must be discharged. The

convicted sinner becomes willing to submit to God in all things except perhaps one, which, though often trifling in itself, costs a severe struggle, sometimes protracted many months, and even years. We once knew a man of great intelligence and deep religious convictions, a pattern of morality and virtue, active and self-denying even in sustaining the church and promoting religion, so much so, that he was regarded as a Christian more consistent than most, who had neglected family prayer. This was a cross he was unwilling to bear, though Christ had said, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross cannot be my disciple." After several years he was persuaded to discharge this duty. Then he immediately experienced an essential change in his mind, and ever afterwards enjoyed religion as he had never done before. In submitting to God by discharging a known duty, he evidently passed from death unto life.

Consecration to God seems to include more than submission and obedience. It seems to be a nobler act, and to introduce one to a higher service. In submission and obedience to God, Christians cheerfully endure the trials that come upon them, and faithfully discharge prescribed or known duties; but in consecration they purpose to do what they can to honor God rather than only what is particularly required, and what they regard as a privilege rather than a duty. Thus it is not specified how much each one ought to give to promote the cause of Christ; but one who has consecrated all his property to the Lord is apt to feel that it is his privilege to give much

more than if he should only inquire, how much it is his duty to give. So the command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," is not addressed to any particular persons, but those who have most fully consecrated themselves to Christ, most cheerfully go wherever they can best honor him, and do whatever will best please Him.

"Now I resolve with all my heart,
With all my powers to serve the Lord;
Nor from His ways will I depart,
Whose service is a rich reward."

SANCTIFICATION.

Sanctification completes the work which regeneration commences. As regeneration is a change from sinfulness to holiness, so sanctification is a change from one degree of holiness to another, till perfect holiness is attained in heaven. Christians are holy in some degree as others are not, but not being perfectly holy they need sanctification. This, however, naturally follows regeneration. The same causes that first inspired Christians with the spirit of holiness will naturally mature it. The seed may have fallen in an uncongenial soil, but if the soil has been cultivated and improved enough to quicken it into life, and it has already taken root, it may reasonably be expected to grow and come to maturity. So Christians as such naturally increase in holiness though they are also naturally sinful. Since the Holy Spirit has renewed them He will naturally sanctify them, and though there is danger of their grieving Him

away, they will be less apt to do so now than before they began to seek and pray for His presence and gracious influences. The temptations which beset them, though still powerful, are weaker than they were, and the influences which lead them to holiness are stronger. Having felt the evil of sin they will shun it, and having experienced delight in holiness they will seek after it. Hence they will generally be found struggling against sin, and increasing in holiness.

There is no such thing as standing still in the Christian life. There must be growth or there will be decay. There must be progress or there will be backsliding. The progress may be slow, and sometimes there is backsliding; but Christians as such are being sanctified, otherwise they can have no satisfactory evidence that they are Christians. There is the same necessity for sanctification that there is for regeneration. It is no more true that, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," than that, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Hence Christians cannot properly feel that their work is done, but only begun. If at any time it should cease, they should abandon their hope of salvation. Sanctification, growth in grace, increase in holiness, is therefore an essential part of Christian experience. Christians are gradually being purified from sin, and becoming pure in heart. The longer they live, the more unshaken is their confidence in God, and their love to him is purer and stronger. Christ, too, becomes more pre-

cious, and their devotion to his service more sincere and constant. Their sorrow for sin is deeper, and they are more careful to do what is right. Their affections are set more on things above, and they are less absorbed in worldly pursuits and pleasures. Their appetites are better controlled, and their passions are less easily and less frequently excited. They are more liberal and self-denying, more humble, meek, forbearing, and forgiving. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

This may seem, at first, to be contrary to the experience of many who have the best evidences of piety. They are apt to look back to the time of their conversion, or to some later seasons, when, as they think, they were better than they are now. But there is more or less excitement accompanying the change which is experienced in becoming a Christian, which should be distinguished from the change itself. There is a kind of zeal and earnestness in religion at such times which is not really a part of it. Hence some may think that they have made little or no progress, though they excel most in their devotion to God. The more holy they become, the greater their remaining sinfulness seems to be. The best saints are apt to regard themselves as the chief of sinners. The first love of Christians may have been more ardent than it has been since, but in most cases it was less pure. Then their religion consisted more in feeling; now it consists more in true and fixed principles of thought and action. Having lost the

glow of excitement, which accompanied their first love, or which they may have since experienced in revivals of religion, they may seem to have lost much of their devotion to God, though they are more sincere and faithful in his worship and service.

The Bible represents sanctification as an essential part of Christian experience. It represents God as sanctifying Christians by his Spirit through the truth, and exhorts them to sanctify themselves by faith and repentance. "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord." "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." "For this is the will of God even your sanctification." "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

The *means* of sanctification are much the same as the means of regeneration; for it is essentially the same work continued. The truths of the Gospel rightly understood and fully believed, are chiefly instrumental in completing as well as beginning the change of character experienced by Christians. In proportion as they are prayerfully studied and considered, they will purify the heart and life. "Sanctify them through the truth, thy Word is truth," was Christ's prayer for his disciples. But whatever tends

to impress the truth on the mind is also a means of sanctification.

Hence prayer and other forms of religious worship, reading the Scriptures, meditation, and the Lord's Supper, are important means of grace. Those who are most sincere and constant in attending these are apt to grow in grace, while those who neglect them, or observe them only in form, are either in a state of great spiritual declension, or still impenitent and hardened in sin.

The various trials and afflictions of life are evidently designed and wisely ordered by God as the means of sanctification to his chosen people, though upon others they may often exert a contrary influence. The loss of property is apt to make Christians richer in faith. The loss of earthly friends makes Christ more precious to them. Sickness reminds them of their dependence on God for numerous blessings of which they are prone to be unmindful in health, and for which they have not been sufficiently grateful, and at the same time strengthens their desires after holiness and the favor of God. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word."

Is *perfect holiness attainable* on earth? It is; and it is not. It is attainable in the sense that it is reason-

ably required and there is no excuse for the least sin. But it is not attainable in the sense that any can reasonably expect to become perfect while they live. None have ever been perfect except Christ. Though the Bible calls such men as Noah and Job perfect, it does not represent them as free from sin. Even the apostle Paul, who was a remarkable example of Christian devotion, had occasion to write, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended." Whenever any shall become as perfect as he was, they may expect to attain to still higher perfection; but till then the doctrine of Christian perfection can scarcely be practical to them. Some, indeed, claim to be perfect, and say they have committed no sin for several months or a long time. But such persons do not appear to be more perfect than many who regard themselves as very sinful. They must have lowered the standard of perfection to suit their false pretensions, and what they call holiness is very far from such as will be attained in heaven. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." "There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not."

Though we do not know why sanctification progresses so slowly, and is not sooner completed, it is probably for much the same reasons that the Israelites wandered forty years in the wilderness instead of soon entering the promised land. They were much better prepared to enter Canaan after their experience in the wilderness than they would have been

before. So though God might doubtless sanctify all Christians in a short time, as he does some who die soon after their conversion, if he should do so in all cases they would not be impressed, as they will be when they reach heaven, with the greatness of their salvation and the exceeding riches of God's grace towards them. So far, too, as their sanctification depends on their own efforts, it should seem that after a long struggle against temptation and sin they will attain to a higher degree of holiness, and be fitted for a higher sphere of existence than they would be if they should be suddenly changed from their natural sinfulness to perfect holiness. The longer and the more severe the conflict with sin shall be, the greater will be the triumph when the victory shall be achieved.

CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE.

All true Christians will continue such. A person cannot be a Christian one day and not a Christian the next; or, admitting the possibility of falling from grace, as it was possible for perfectly holy beings to become sinful, there is reason to believe in the perseverance of all true Christians. They will often need repentance and renewed consecration to God, but having already passed from death unto life, they will never need to experience again precisely the same change, but will finally attain to perfect holiness in heaven. If it depended chiefly on themselves, there would be indeed great uncertainty respecting the result, or rather it would be certain that they would all fail of salvation; but so far as they

have evidence that God has begun a good work in them, they may be confident, as the apostle Paul was, that he will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. It is true he will not work in them to will and to do of His own good pleasure, unless they work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, yet since His Spirit has led them to become Christians, there is reason to believe that he will certainly lead them to persevere to the end. So far, too, as it depends on themselves, they will be much more apt to continue in the Christian life than they were to commence it. Temptations may sometimes overcome them, and their own evil propensities may make their progress in holiness very slow, yet they will never entirely forsake the way of life, or cease altogether to hunger and thirst after righteousness. Many professing Christians, and some who have long been regarded as truly devoted to Christ, may become apostates and perish, but "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

The perseverance of Christians is clearly taught in the Bible. Christ taught his disciples, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, *hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation*, but is passed from death unto life." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, *neither shall any pluck them out of my hands*." "He that believeth on me *hath everlasting life*." "He that received seed into the

good ground, is he that heareth the word and understandeth it ; which also beareth fruit and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty." True Christians are here referred to in distinction from others who for a time appear to enjoy religion very much, having received the Word with joy, yet have no root, which for a while believe, but in time of temptation fall away. The apostle Paul speaking of Christians as called of God, wrote: "Whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, *them he also glorified* ;" again, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, *shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.*" And the apostle Peter represents Christians as "*kept* by the power of God through faith unto *salvation.*"

Some passages of Scripture are considered by many as teaching that Christians do not all continue such, but that some fall from grace, as: "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." But in the first place, it is not certain that the persons here described are true Christians, and they may be such as have been clearly enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and powerfully impressed with religious truths without becoming true Christians, so that they are

in a hopeless state. The connection seems to show that they are not Christians, for they are compared to the earth that bringeth forth thorns and briars, and is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned. Besides, admitting that Christians are referred to, it is not said or implied, that any of them ever will fall away, but only that if they should fall away it would be impossible to renew them again unto repentance. It is added, too, "*But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things which accompany salvation* though we thus speak." Such passages of Scripture imply, indeed, that Christians need to guard against being led astray, like the apostle Paul, who said, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway;" yet they are not inconsistent with the full assurance of final salvation.

It is thought by many that there are examples mentioned in the Bible of persons who fell from grace, like Peter and Judas, and others constantly occurring. But the case of Peter only illustrates how true Christians, under sudden or great temptation, may sometimes commit heinous sins, yet soon repent of them, weeping bitterly, and afterwards be more faithful than before; while that of Judas shows that persons may profess to be Christians, and be regarded as such a long time, yet be hypocrites or self-deceived.

There are plainly tares among the wheat, yet, though it is impossible for us to distinguish them, the wheat

never becomes tares. Of some it is written, "They went out from us, but they *were not of us* ; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt have continued with us* ; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they *were not all of us*." Christ also said, "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works ; and then will I profess unto them I *never* knew you."

Though it has been objected to the truth under consideration that it is fitted to encourage those who think they are Christians to indulge in sin, as though their salvation might be secured without increasing in holiness, it only encourages them with the assurance of final success while they are shunning sin and making attainments in holiness. No one can have evidence that he is a Christian unless he continues faithful unto death, yet all need to be assured that even the first exercise of faith in Christ will secure their salvation, otherwise they will have much less to encourage them to become Christians, or to continue faithful as such. If they may be Christians for a long time, yet finally be overcome by sudden and strong temptation, and perish like those who always neglect the great salvation ; if there is so much uncertainty about the final result of their efforts, however earnest and protracted they may be, it should not seem strange that so few become Christians, or that Christians become remiss in their efforts, and negligent of duty. We are so constituted that the

greater our assurance of final success is, the more we are encouraged to persevere in efforts to secure any desirable object; so the greater the assurance of Christians is that they will finally attain to perfect holiness in heaven, the more earnest and faithful they are in its pursuit. Hence Christian perseverance is a decisive *test* of Christian character. If we are true Christians we shall continually grow in grace, increase in holiness: forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, we shall press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Though we may sometimes stumble and fall, or be ready to faint and relax our efforts, it is only so far as we are faithful unto death that we should hope to receive a crown of life. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES.

Some enjoy greater privileges than others. In many respects the rich and powerful have greater privileges than the poor and weak. The privileges enjoyed under a free and good government are very desirable. It is a privilege to belong to a highly respectable family, to be thoroughly educated, and to be admitted into the best society. But Christians as such are highly privileged above all others.*

One peculiar privilege of Christians is *forgiveness* or *pardon*. They are released from the dreadful condemnation of sin, and at peace with God. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which

are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

A sense of unforgiven sin is one of the principal sources of disquietude, and often of great misery among men. It may not be much noticed, yet it is deep enough to embitter the life of most persons. Its subject may not be willing to confess it to others; he may not even acknowledge it to himself, but he feels it, and it makes him unhappy. There is, perhaps, no particular alarm, no great agitation, no deep and agonizing remorse, but a gloominess of feeling at times, and a sense of God's displeasure, accompanied with the fear of the judgment to come, that disturbs one's peace and mars his enjoyment. Sometimes it becomes overwhelming, crushing to the spirit, so that anguish and despair dispel every other feeling. Whatever religious opinions men entertain; however absurdly they may reason, and whether they pervert the Scriptures or not; though they are Infidels, Deists, or Atheists, they cannot get rid of the conviction of sin, or the dread of its consequences. They may frame a multitude of excuses for their sins; they may flatter themselves that all will be well with them hereafter; they may persuade themselves to believe that there is no future state, or at least no future punishment, yet they cannot feel at ease.

What a privilege then is forgiveness? What a burden is rolled off of the mind of every one who has satisfactory evidence that he is a Christian, a par-

doned sinner! How differently he feels! What peace of mind he experiences! unlike anything he ever experienced before. "Forgiveness," it has been truly said, "is the charm that soothes to quietness the disquieted spirit; it is like oil poured on the troubled waters, producing an undisturbed calm." What different persons would many be, if a sense of God's forgiveness, full and free, should take the place of that sense of unforgiven sin which now oppresses them and darkens their prospects. God would appear different; the world, life, death, everything, would wear a totally different aspect.

Another Christian privilege is *adoption*. "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that *we might receive the adoption of sons*." "And because ye are *sons*, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestinated us unto the *adoption of children*, by Jesus Christ, to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace." "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the *sons of God*." "Beloved, now are we the *sons of God*." "Wherefore thou art no more a ser-

vant but a *son* ; and if a son, then an *heir* of God through Christ."

As the adopted children of God, Christians enjoy *communion* with him. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." "If a man love me," said Christ, "he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our *abode* with him." It is, indeed, mysterious how Christians have fellowship with God, and how the Father and the Son make their abode with them; but the truth is plainly taught in the passages just cited, and it is not unreasonable that He who made them, should in some way manifest Himself to them, so that, though they neither see nor hear Him, they often feel that He is with them, and enjoy His presence. Thus Jacob had occasion to say, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven." So, also, Christians are accustomed to commune with God. "It is good for me to draw near to God." "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to thee." When, at times, a Christian is deprived of this privilege, he is wont to say, "Oh God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary."

Christians, also, enjoy communion one with another. Of course this must be confined, more or less, to a few with whom they meet and are most intimate,

and it is affected, to some extent, by their other relations in life; but Christians enjoy particularly the society of other Christians who sympathize with them in their devotion to Christ, and in their efforts to honor him. They generally prefer Christian conversation or intercourse to that of the world, and regard it as a higher privilege to be associated with the people of God than with princes. They are seldom willing to live where they cannot have this privilege, unless it seems to be their duty for the sake of doing greater good to others.

Christians, too, are the *heirs* of God and of heaven. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." If it is desirable to be an heir to a rich inheritance, or to a throne on earth, how great is the privilege of being heirs of salvation, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Unbelievers prefer an earthly inheritance, but believers the heavenly.

CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE word *church* means an assembly. As used in the New Testament it means an assembly of Christians. The true church of which Christ is the Head (Col. 1:18), sometimes called the catholic or universal church, includes all true Christians of every nation, sect, and age. But churches are composed of any number of professing Christians who are accustomed to meet in the name of Christ for religious worship. Originally some of them met in private houses, as the church in the house of Nymphas, and the church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila. It does not appear that they were regularly organized at first, or had officers, but only met for religious worship. * Very soon, however, bishops (overseers) were appointed over each church. These were also called presbyters or elders, being naturally selected from the older members. Ere long some of them became teachers or pastors. Thus churches were regularly organized, with officers, by the apostles in various places. Such organizations are plainly authorized and approved of in the New Testament, and so far have Divine authority, but not in such a sense that churches could not exist without them, or that there may not properly be other forms of organization, and other officers. It is not probable, indeed, that any

churches at the present day are precisely like those instituted by the Apostles, or that Christ designed to establish a uniform mode of church administration. One may be better than another, or more nearly like the Apostolic churches, but who certainly knows which is? Al. that is essential is, that Christians should unite in the name of Christ and observe the ordinances, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and religious worship. Christ's promise is, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

BAPTISM.

Baptism is the authorized form of admission into the Christian church. Christ commanded his disciples, "Go ye, and teach all nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The rite in itself has no efficacy, and does not change the character of its subject; but it is highly useful to Christians as signifying the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It is not regeneration, except as this term has sometimes been used to denote the change in the outward relation of baptized persons to the church referred to in the expression, born of water; but it signifies regeneration by the Holy Spirit either as already experienced, or as necessary.

Two *modes* of baptism are used, sprinkling and immersion. Most persons believe that sprinkling is the Scriptural mode, and that the original word translated baptize, includes sprinkling as well as immersion, especially as used in the Scriptures. It seems probable that John the Baptist baptized by

immersion, but that Christ's disciples baptized by sprinkling, in accordance with the Jewish custom of baptizing heathen proselytes, first by immersion to denote their renunciation of idolatry, and afterwards by sprinkling to denote their conversion to the Jewish religion. John's baptism was not the same as Christian baptism, for the Apostle Paul said to some who had been baptized by John, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is on Christ, and when they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Christian baptism seems to have been administered by sprinkling. In some cases it could scarcely have been administered by immersion. It seems impossible that the disciples of Christ could have baptized three thousand persons on the day of Pentecost after they had been first converted the same day by their preaching. Nor does it seem probable that the jailer and his family were baptized by immersion the same night he believed, after midnight, and in the prison. The baptism of the Apostle Paul, as related, is inconsistent with the idea of immersion, for being in a house, and having been just restored to sight, he arose and was baptized. Besides, there is no reason why baptism by sprinkling should have been introduced and have become so prevalent at an early period if it was not the authorized mode. Though, too, it could be proved that baptism was originally administered by immersion in a warm climate, it

should not be inferred that it ought to be in colder countries, where, in many cases, it cannot be without great exposure of health, while sprinkling is understood to signify the same. Especially, since the most candid persons differ in their opinions on the subject, the mode of baptism should not be considered essential. Either mode fulfills the design of baptism if believed to be authorized, and Christ looks on the heart rather than the mode.

The *proper subjects* of baptism are true Christians and their families. All admit that true Christians are proper subjects, but a great many doubt the propriety of baptizing infants and others belonging to the families of Christians. One reason they assign is, that it is not expressly commanded. But, for the same reason, Christians should not keep the Christian Sabbath but the Jewish, and they need not pray in their families.

The Scriptural authority for infant baptism is derived partly from the consideration that baptism takes the place of circumcision. Though this was a national rite, and partly designed to keep the Jews distinct from other nations, it was chiefly a seal of God's covenant with Abraham and his posterity, especially his spiritual descendants. As such, it was essentially the same as Christian baptism. The Apostle Paul called it a seal of the righteousness by faith. He also wrote, "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in

the spirit and not in the letter.” The same is true of baptism. It has become the seal of the righteousness by faith in the place of circumcision, and since infants were circumcised they should now be baptized. Of what use, it may be asked, is such an ordinance to an infant? Of precisely the same use that circumcision was.

Instances related in the New Testament favor infant baptism. Infants were brought to Christ that He might bless them, and when His disciples rebuked those who brought them, He said, “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Though this does not refer to baptism, should it not encourage parents to consecrate their children to Christ as is done in their baptism? It is also related that Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul, was baptized, and her household; also, that the jailer was baptized and all his straightway. It appears that in these instances the families of believers were baptized as well as themselves, and though there may have been no infants or children in them, there probably were, or if there had been, they would have been baptized.

It appears, also, from history, that infant baptism has been administered in Christian churches as far back as any reference is made to it, and that the opposition to it did not originate till about the eleventh century. No time can be specified when it was introduced since that of the apostles, and

hence it should be inferred that they authorized and administered it.

The *relation of baptized children to the church* is peculiar and interesting. Since baptism is the regular form of admission to the Christian church, they are members of it as the circumcised children of the Jews were members of the Jewish church, As such they are the objects of God's special favor, and He has made special promises to them, as it is written : "For the promise is to you and your *children* ;" also, "I will establish my covenant with thee, and with thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant." They cannot, indeed, be received into Christian fellowship, since they do not profess to be Christians, and they are not members of any particular church till they assent to its covenant ; but their relation to the church of Christ should be regarded as very important. There is abundant evidence that God has been faithful to His promises. Children who have been consecrated to God in baptism, and whose parents have been mindful of the obligations thus assumed, have shared largely in the blessings of grace and salvation. It is true that the obligations of parents to their children are essentially the same without baptism as with it—and, in either case, the blessing of God, doubtless, accompanies the faithful discharge of parental duties ; but infant baptism, regarded as a Christian duty, is a solemn ordinance fitted to impress parents with a sense of their obligations, so that they are more apt to be faithful to their chil

dren; and these, when they learn what their parents have done for them and begin to realize what is involved in it, are more apt to feel their own obligations to God, and to seek the blessings promised them for the sake of their pious parents. Their baptism, also, should elicit for them the prayers of the whole church, and special efforts to secure their repentance and salvation.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The *Lord's Supper* is a Christian ordinance instituted by Christ, just before His death, as a memorial of himself. "Do this," He said to His disciples, "in remembrance of me." As a dying friend is apt to leave some memorial of his love, so this is Christ's memorial. It is admirably fitted, also, to fulfill its design, being so simple, that the mind is not apt to be so much occupied with the ceremony as to forget its meaning, also so generally and frequently observed, that none can easily avoid being often solemnly impressed with the truths it signifies.

In remembering Christ at His table, Christians think of Him as the Son of God, one with the Father and Himself God, otherwise the ordinance is not worthy of observance. They, also, think of His humiliation in laying aside the glory He had with the Father before the world was, becoming a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, being despised and rejected of men, and not having where He might lay His head, and of His ministry in going about doing good, healing diseases, and preaching

the Gospel to the poor. But they commemorate particularly His sufferings and death on the cross. "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

The proper observance of the Lord's Supper must evidently be accompanied with true repentance for sin. "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." "All we, like sheep, have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Hence, in approaching the Lord's table, all should feel humble and penitent in view of their sinfulness and guilt. At the same time they should trust in Him as their Saviour, and thus be filled with the peace of God that passeth all understanding, and with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The Lord's Supper should be a joyful occasion to Christians. Though they must come to it as sinners, they should come with their guilt washed away, and clothed in the robes of Christ's righteousness, so that they may not eat and drink unworthily, but have a foretaste of the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Here, too, they should renewedly consecrate themselves to the service of Christ, that they may better adorn their profession by holy living, keeping themselves unspotted from the world. Such an observance of the

Lord's Supper, being in accordance with Christ's commandment to His disciples just before His death, is plainly a Christian duty, and should be regarded as a great privilege. Especially how can any, who hope for salvation through Christ, be willing or disposed to neglect it?

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

The Sabbath is a day of sacred rest; not merely of rest, but *sacred* rest. The fourth commandment is, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it *holy*. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." It is, therefore, a day set apart for sacred or religious duties.

At first the seventh day of the week was the Sabbath, and the same day is still observed as such by the Jews and a few Christians. But since the resurrection of Christ, the first day of the week has been generally observed by Christians as the Sabbath, in commemoration of that event. His disciples were accustomed to meet on the first day of the week for religious worship, and Christ may be considered as having sanctioned the observance of that day as the Sabbath, by appearing to them at different times

when they were assembled for worship. There seems to be no reason, indeed, why the change should have been made without His authority or the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is, also, particularly appropriate, that as the Sabbath was originally instituted to commemorate the work of creation, it should be changed to commemorate the more important event of Christ's resurrection, and be called the Christian Sabbath. Besides, it is evidently not essential what particular day is observed, or at what particular hour it begins, only there are obvious reasons why we as Christians should observe the Christian Sabbath.

It has been thought that the Sabbath was designed only for the Jews. But it was instituted at the creation long before the Jewish nation existed. The division of time into weeks of seven days proves that it was instituted before the human race was divided into nations and widely scattered. If, too, only the Jews were commanded to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, why^e should it not be supposed that they only were commanded not to kill or steal? Besides, Christ taught that the Sabbath was made for *man*, all men.

All men *need* the Sabbath. Facts abundantly prove that the body needs more rest than night affords. It has been found by extensive observation that constant labor for more than six days in a week detracts from the vigor of the body, so that the same person can accomplish more in the course of his lifetime by resting on the Sabbath than by laboring every day. Distinguished physicians say that cessa-

tion from labor one day in seven contributes to the preservation of health and the restoration of the bodily powers. Dr. Rush remarked: "If there was no hereafter, individuals and communities would be great gainers by attendance on public worship. Rest from labor and a proper observance of the Sabbath wind up the machinery of the body better than anything else, and invigorates it for the labors of the ensuing week." The writer once heard a man say, that when he moved to the West, before canals and railroads were made, he traveled with several others. Some of them rested on the Sabbath and some proceeded on their journey. Near the end of each week those who rested on the Sabbath usually overtook the others, and at the end of their journey the horses and cattle that had rest were in much the best condition. This is one of a great many facts which prove that the Sabbath was made for man, and ought to be regarded.

The mind, also, needs the rest and change of employment which the Sabbath affords. Though great care be taken to relax its energies during the week, its vigor will be considerably impaired by six days close application to study, or any business that requires much thought. Such a man as Wilberforce of England said, he could never have accomplished so much in public life but for the rest of the Sabbath; and his observation had taught him that many doubtless have found a premature grave or become insane by not withdrawing their minds from business on this day.

As moral beings, too, we need to observe the Sabbath. A disregard of this day is apt to lead to immorality and crime. Blackstone, the distinguished commentator on law, whose authority is as great as that of any man, said that a corruption of morals usually follows a profanation of the Sabbath. In the State Prison of Connecticut ninety out of a hundred of its inmates, at the time of the investigation, had been habitual Sabbath-breakers. A keeper of one of the largest prisons said nine-tenths of the convicts were persons who had disregarded the Sabbath. A distinguished merchant said: "When I see one of my clerks riding out for pleasure on the Sabbath, I dismiss him on Monday, for such an one cannot be trusted." The best classes in society consist chiefly of persons who are more or less strict in keeping the Sabbath, and the best communities are those in which this day is most sacredly regarded.

Many instances, likewise, have been related, and are frequently occurring, in which God, by His providence, punishes in a striking manner persons who desecrate the Sabbath. More accidents happen, and more lives are lost on the Sabbath than on other days in proportion to the number that travel and seek recreation. It is true that such calamities come on all men—and in particular cases it may be doubtful why they have occurred, yet a careful and extended observation will afford clear evidence that God blesses those who keep the Sabbath and curses those who desecrate it. "God blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." Blessed is the man that keepeth the

Sabbath from polluting it. On the other hand, God said to the Jews: "Ye have despised my holy things and profaned my Sabbath, therefore I have poured out my indignation upon you; your own way have I recompensed upon your heads." Though we may not be able to apply these passages with certainty to particular cases, they are as applicable to men now as ever.

Again, the Sabbath is indispensable to the preservation and extension of religion and the salvation of men. Blot out this day and you will blot out all vital religion. There would soon be no Christians if the day devoted to the worship of God and religious duties should cease to be observed. There would be few, if any conversions, and no revivals of religion. Even those who have already begun to hunger and thirst after righteousness would soon become absorbed in worldly pursuits and sinful pleasures. Let the sacred influences of this holy day be suspended, and who can doubt that, according to the natural course of things, the Christian religion would soon be extirpated, and the waves of infidelity and irreligion roll over every land, sweeping away all that is cheering in the hopes and pleasing in the promises which now lighten up the Christian bosom with joy! Hence it is that the enemies of the Sabbath and of true religion are found in the same ranks. The friends of religion are the friends of the Sabbath. To truly pious persons this sacred day is sweet, and often longed for. Their language is:

“ Welcome, sweet day of rest,
That saw the Lord arise ;
Welcome to this reviving breast,
And these rejoicing eyes.”

The *proper observance* of the Sabbath consists in keeping it holy—as a day set apart from a common to a sacred use, or as a day devoted to the Lord. In one sense, indeed, every day should be kept holy ; but while we should devote our lives to the Lord and do all things to His glory, we may properly attend to business and indulge in various kinds of pleasures on other days which are forbidden on the Sabbath. One day in seven is the Lord’s day. Then the appropriate business of other days is to be laid aside, and even the innocent pleasures and amusements of common life are to be suspended. We may, indeed, as Christ taught, do works of necessity and mercy, and, perhaps, a less punctilious observance of the day in some respects is admissible than was required of the Jews or practised by our Puritan forefathers, provided the appropriate duties of the day shall not be neglected, and shall be faithfully and acceptably discharged ; but the day should be devoted to the special worship of God and various religious exercises and duties. All worldly pursuits, worldly conversation, and worldly thoughts, should be avoided as much as possible. Yet spending the Sabbath in idleness would not be keeping it holy. Prayer, reading the Bible, and such religious books as illustrate and enforce its truths, devout meditation, family and public worship, religious instruction,

and such like duties only, are appropriate to the day of sacred rest, and there is less danger of being too strict than not strict enough in discharging them. Sincerity especially is requisite. To keep the Sabbath, yet be prompted to say, "What a weariness is it? When will the day be gone?"—is scarcely less offensive to God than its open desecration. But "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable, and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

The guilt of those who do not remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy is exceedingly great and aggravated. None, indeed, keep it holy in all respects, but God accepts of the sincere desire and purpose to keep it though accompanied with imperfect obedience, and condemns insincerity and willful disobedience. How great, then, is the guilt of desecrating or even neglecting the Sabbath! Think of it. The day approaches. The sun rises—to a devout mind it often seems with unusual splendor, declaring the glory of God. The earth is animated with life and clothed with beauty, displaying His wisdom and goodness. The birds sing His praise, and the beasts rejoice. It is a day of rest. Man need not go forth

to his accustomed toil. He may, to-day, commune with God. The time may be spent in meditation, prayer, and worship, or reading the Word of God. The sanctuary is open, the Gospel is preached, and the offer of salvation proclaimed. But the day passes away, and from many dwellings no incense of prayer and praise ascends—in many hearts there are no aspirations after God and holiness. Not a moment, perhaps, is consecrated to the Lord. Of those who enter the sanctuary only a few are sincere worshipers. Many engage only in the form of worship without its spirit, and their thoughts are engrossed with the world and its pursuits. The day is often devoted, more than any other, to sensual pleasures and vain amusements. With many it is a day for visiting or recreation, rioting, and drunkenness. Thus the day which God has hallowed is secretly or openly profaned. Before another Sabbath many are summoned into His presence. How must they feel if only one desecrated Sabbath be remembered! Will those who are not willing to devote one day in seven to the Lord, spend eternity in His worship and service? Since they delight not in the Sabbath on earth, will they be prepared for the eternal Sabbath in heaven?

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

The worship of God naturally accompanies the knowledge of Him. He claims it, and all who love Him cheerfully render it, not only in secret

and in the family, but also in public. An important part of worship, prayer, has been already considered, but *Public Worship* as such, also, demands special attention. Among the Jews it was once chiefly confined to the Tabernacle and Temple, but at a later period was held in the Synagogues in various places. Though essentially the same at all times, it consisted more in sacrifices and ceremonies than since these were fulfilled in Christ, who has taught us more clearly how we may worship God acceptably in spirit and in truth.

Among Christians, public worship includes the worship of Christ, the Son of God, and of the Holy Spirit. "The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." "God, also, hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." It is only through Christ, as Mediator between God and man, and by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, that we can worship the Father acceptably. Christian churches, properly so-called, worship God as the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and are formed chiefly for this purpose. They are exhorted not to forsake the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is, and in proportion as they have evidence that they

are Christians, they will delight in public worship, and be accustomed, as far as possible, to meet regularly for this purpose. "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." "A day spent in thy courts is better than a thousand." "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness."

The *appropriate exercises* of public worship are chiefly prayer, singing spiritual songs and preaching, and hearing the Word of God. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." "And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright and in the congregation." "They assembled themselves with the church and taught much people." "The next Sabbath came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God."

Of course, *sincerity* is essential to true worship. God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Appropriate forms, indeed, are required, and they often help the spirit of devotion. Assuming the attitude of worshipers often prepares the mind for spiritual exercises.

Bowing the knees may help to humble the heart. Confession of sin may lead to true repentance. The voice of prayer sometimes quickens the spirit. It is certain the spirit of worship will be expressed in appropriate forms. It may be justly inferred that those who habitually neglect public worship also neglect spiritual worship. They do not generally remain at home for the purpose of worshiping God in spirit. But there is often the form of worship without its spirit. Many come to the sanctuary, yet the sincere worshipers are few. Some who sing sacred songs, and, doubtless, who offer solemn prayers, have not hearts attuned to the praise of God, or truly devout. There is much solemn mockery of Him even when He is professedly worshiped. Hence all should be careful not only to engage in the worship of God at appropriate seasons, but also to cherish the spirit of devotion.

Many of the remarks respecting the Sabbath are applicable to public worship since it is evidently included in the proper observance of the Sabbath, but there are special reasons why it should be regarded as both a duty and privilege.

Public worship *honors* God. Men are often honored by public meetings held for the purpose, in which the public approbation and esteem are expressed. So God is honored by those who meet for His worship, and the highest honor is due to Him. He only is to be worshiped. "The Lord is great and greatly to be praised." "O come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."

“O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, fear before him all the earth.”

What is the impression naturally made on the mind by seeing the people in any place assembling in great numbers on the Sabbath for religious worship, especially if they go regularly to the sanctuary to unite in prayer and praise and to hear the Word of God? Many of them may be insincere, yet such a custom will not long prevail without real sincerity on the part of many. Some may go because others do, but in proportion as sincerity is wanting, the attendance will be small. In a large congregation of worshipers, without any special attractions of outward forms and ceremonies, or of eloquence and music, there must be more or less sincerity, and the impression made on the mind is, that God is regarded as worthy of the supreme love and devotion of men. When we go into any place and see as the most prominent object a suitable house of worship with its spire pointing to heaven, as if to remind the people where their thoughts and affections should chiefly be, and on the Sabbath hear the church-bell summoning them together, and see them generally assembling for religious worship, we feel that God is honored in that place. On the other hand, if we find no house dedicated to God, and on the Sabbath see none assembling for His worship, we feel that God is dishonored there. How can the people in a community honor God more than by a regular attendance on public worship and a daily life that evinces the sincerity of their love and devotion?

Public worship is, also, *intimately connected with temporal prosperity*. We may not notice the connection, nor always be able to discover it, yet it evidently exists. The prosperity of the Jews depended in a great measure on their religious worship. When they sincerely worshiped Jehovah they were blessed, but when they worshiped idols, or became insincere and corrupt, they were visited with famine, pestilences, and wars, carried into captivity, and finally destroyed as a nation. The prosperity of Jerusalem especially was greatly promoted, because thither the tribes of the Lord went up unto the testimony of Israel to give thanks unto the Lord. So the sincere worship of God in any community greatly promotes its welfare. A narrow and contracted view may lead some persons to a different conclusion. By estimating only the cost of public worship and the time devoted to it, we might be led to the conclusion that the people are so much poorer than they might have been. But we shall find on careful observation that those who do most to support public worship are generally blessed with the greatest temporal prosperity. The displeasure of God evidently rests on those communities, families, and individuals who neglect His worship. Such neglect is usually attended with vicious indulgences or with extravagance and dissipation, which are far more expensive than public worship. If any one thinks that he cannot afford to provide himself and his family a seat in the sanctuary, let him calculate whether this would cost more than they will be apt to spend

elsewhere in feasting or amusements, at saloons or grog-shops, and in other ways, if they are not accustomed to attend public worship. It has been found by long observation that when the people in a community neglect to build a house of worship or allow one to go to decay, and suspend the ordinances of the Gospel, the value of property is far less than in other similar places where public worship is attended. So evident is this, that infidels and irreligious men have often aided in building churches and supporting public worship, chiefly for the purpose of increasing the value of their property. In proportion, too, as public worship is neglected, the expenses of private law-suits and criminal courts increase. Those who rob God of His worship, rob themselves of a great deal more than it would cost to build a church and sustain its ordinances.

Again, public worship is *favorable to intelligence, virtue, and social order*. An influence goes forth from the sanctuary pervading more or less all minds, which tends to diffuse through society the purest sentiments, the most shining virtues, the truest refinement, and the highest intellectual and moral culture. This influence might be greatly increased by a more general, regular, and devout attendance, but to it we already owe far the larger share of our social privileges and blessings. Who would be willing to live where there is no house of worship and where no worshiping assembly ever meets? What kind of society would be found in such a place? Such as some, indeed, prefer, but only

persons lost to virtue and all that contributes to the public good.

Most important is the consideration that the place of worship is apt to be the *gate of heaven to immortal souls*. If, as in some periods of Christianity, an attendance on public worship should expose us to persecution and death, still we should not be willing to relinquish it. If we are already Christians, the children of God, and heirs of heaven, it is not probable that we should have become such, if we had never attended public worship; and if it should now be suspended, and its hallowed influences should cease to be felt, there would be no more conversions, and no more growth in grace. How intimately, then, are our hopes of heaven, both for ourselves and others, connected with public worship! They would all vanish with the suspension of the various means of grace connected with it. Those who habitually neglect the worship of God on earth should abandon all hope of uniting with those who worship him in heaven. If we would cherish such a hope, we must keep company with the people of God, go with them to His house, and unite with them in His worship; sing with them the songs of Zion, and pray with them for the blessings of grace and salvation. Thus only shall we be prepared for the worship and service of God in heaven.

THE MILLENNIUM.

It appears to have been a favorite opinion in all ages of the world, that a happier period is approaching. Even heathen poets have sung of the returning golden age, or a period of great happiness on the earth. What is so generally believed is apt to have some foundation in reason, though the truth itself may be very imperfectly understood and mingled with much error, but it is certain only so far as the Bible clearly predicts it.

The happy period referred to is now commonly called the Millennium, which means a period of a thousand years. It is so called because it is generally believed to be the same period that is predicted in the passage from Revelation, "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Whether this passage refers to it or not, numerous other passages clearly predict the final triumph of truth and righteousness among men, as : "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." "The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." "All kings shall fall down before Him ; all nations shall serve Him." "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the

hills, and *all nations* shall flow unto it." "And He shall judge among the nations, and they shall beat their swords into plow shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more." "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least unto the greatest, saith the Lord." "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

The precise *time* when the Millennium will begin cannot be certainly determined. All human predictions respecting it have hitherto failed. But the signs of the times indicate its rapid approach. Christian missions have been established in all parts of the world, and have already accomplished a great work. The Bible has been translated into many languages and widely circulated. Facilities for communication with all parts of the world are greatly multiplied. Many are running to and fro, and knowledge is increased. We may expect, too, that the Gospel will be more rapidly diffused in succeeding years.

The promises of God are sure, though with him one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The reasonable expectation of the Millennium affords abundant encouragement to Christians in their efforts to spread the Gospel, and to convert the world. Even their past success has been greater than could have been reasonably expected from the means employed. But they should be encouraged to put forth much greater efforts; for they are sure of final success, and the prospect now is that the spread of truth and holiness will soon be much more rapid than in any past period. To some it may seem that God can and will accomplish his purposes of grace without any efforts on the part of His people, but we are plainly taught that His purposes include human instrumentality, and that it is our privilege, as well as duty, to be humble instruments in saving others, and hastening forward the glorious period, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever: otherwise, too, we should not hope to be rewarded with the faithful who shall receive a crown of life. "Behold," says Christ, "I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be."

The Millennium, especially, is fitted to impress us with the glory of God in respect to the great number who will be finally saved. He is glorified by the salvation of a single soul, and still more by the salvation of all those who have been already redeemed

from among men. But hitherto, there is reason to fear, comparatively few have been saved, and the larger part of the world is still sunk in ignorance, superstition and corruption. If, however, the Millennium shall continue only a thousand years, as we compute time, the population of the earth would soon become so great, after wars, intemperance, and other vices, also the diseases which sin occasions, shall cease, that it will far exceed the whole number previously born. It will naturally be doubled in every fifty years, and, at that rate, as it has been estimated by a plain arithmetical calculation, the number of inhabitants on the earth during the Millennium, will be more than seventeen thousand times greater than the whole number during all the time preceding it. Besides it is not certain that the Millennium will be limited to a thousand years as we compute time. It may be a much longer period. Supposing, then, that during the happy period referred to, most of the inhabitants on the earth will be converted and saved in addition to the number who will be before, including also infants, it is easy to estimate that there will be thousands saved to one lost. At least there will be a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who shall stand before the Throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands, crying with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

"The eye of hope," said Prof. Stuart, "is directed

forward and sees the thousand years of uninterrupted prosperity, and then after the destruction of a sudden and new enemy, all is left to joyful anticipations. When all the clouds are swept away from the face of the sky, why should not the sun shine forth in full splendor? I cannot doubt that the setting sun of the Church on earth is to be as a heaven of unclouded splendor. Peaceful and triumphant will be her latest age. The number of the redeemed will be augmented beyond all computation. The understanding and pious reader of Revelation closes the book with admiration, with wonder, with delight, and with lofty anticipations of the future, and with undaunted resolution to follow in the footsteps of those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises, and entered into everlasting rest."

LIFE THE ONLY SEASON OF PROBATION.

“BE not deceived ; God is not mocked ; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Life is here represented as the seed-time of our existence. We are now sowing the seed of joy or sorrow, and what we sow we shall reap. Assuming for the present our future existence, we shall show that the present life is connected with the life to come ; that our characters and conduct in this world will determine whether we shall be happy or miserable in eternity. This should be inferred from our past experience and observation. There is, certainly, a connection between early life and middle or advanced life. The habits formed in youth are apt to adhere to a person in manhood and old age. Good children naturally become good men and women, while the opposite is true of the bad. Idleness and dissipation, vice and crime in youth, lead to poverty and want, wretchedness and sorrow, in mature life, and often to a premature grave ; while industry, frugality, morality, and virtue, lead to prosperity, respectability, and happiness. There are, indeed, many exceptions to this rule in life viewed separately from

its results in eternity. The connection between what men sow and what they reap is not uniform in this world, yet it is certain, and we are led to suspect, that there will be more reaping after death. Even here the reaping is usually long after the sowing. See the intemperate. At first they seem to be secure and happy, but, ere long, they reap disgrace, wretchedness, sorrow, poverty, disease terminating in delirium tremens, and premature death. See the criminals in jails and prisons. They are only reaping what they have sown. Again, notice the idle and improvident. How soon they begin to reap embarrassment, failure, and want! On the other hand, industry and perseverance, accompanied with prudence, economy, temperance, and such like virtues, seldom fail to produce a fruitful old age. Thus we may observe, as another has remarked, that "On the one hand the consequences of vice travel over in advance of the pleasure it at first affords, and fix themselves deep beyond human power to eradicate them in the property, health, reputation, or peace of the man of guilt—nay, perhaps the consequences thicken until we take our last view of him as he gasps in death, and all that we know of him as he goes from our observation is, that heaven's thunderbolts are seen trembling in the hand of God and pointing their vengeance at the head of the dying man. On the other hand, the happy consequences of virtue are so uniform that all expect its practice will render them more or less prosperous, respectable, and happy."

Now, should it be supposed that all the natural consequences of our course of life which follow us to its close will cease to follow us beyond the grave? What is there in death more than in sleep to break the connection between our characters and conduct now and our future happiness or misery? Why may we not as reasonably believe that what we do to-day will not affect us to-morrow, as that our present course of life will not affect our well-being in eternity? We should also consider that the results of life as they are known in this world, are, doubtless, widely different from what they would be if life should be longer.

It is particularly important to notice in what respects life is a season of probation. It is not a probation like that of our first parents in Eden. It will not determine whether we shall remain holy or become sinful. This is already determined. Our probation is that of sinners to whom forgiveness and salvation are offered on condition of repentance and faith in Christ as our Saviour. Whatever our characters may be in other respects, however amiable and virtuous, or however vile, in one respect we are all alike, and the momentous concern of life is *salvation*, and life will determine whether we shall believe in Christ, and be saved or believe not and be damned. "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

Life, too, is the *only* season of probation. It is *sufficient*. It may not seem so to those who are disposed to defer the chief concern of life to a later

period, but if rightly improved it will be long enough. Momentous as are the interests at stake, much time is not required to transact all the business that pertains to eternity. The salvation of the soul can be secured at any moment, in a brief period as well as in eternity. A longer period than life, short and uncertain as it is, would not be improved if the allotted period is not. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." For the same reason, if they believe not the Gospel on earth, neither would they believe it though it should be preached to them after death. The idea of another probation only encourages sinners to neglect this. Nor is there the least intimation in the Scriptures that another probation will be allotted to men. On the contrary, they plainly teach that life is the only season of probation. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." "Work while it is called to day; the night cometh in which no man can work." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

D E A T H .

We are already familiar enough with *Death*. We know what it is, its certainty, its suddenness, its terrors, and its solemnity. In these respects we need neither reason nor revelation to teach us more respecting it. It is certainly the end of life, more or less melancholy and dreadful to all, alarming and terrible to some, yet to others cheered with the liveliest hopes and the most pleasing anticipations. We shall consider it chiefly as the consequence of sin, or as affected by it, and as the commencement of an endless existence in another world or state.

Death, as we consider it, is a part of the curse pronounced on men as sinners, but not a part of the proper penalty of sin. The penalty was: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The curse was: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Believers in Christ are delivered from the proper penalty of sin, but not from its curse, including the death of the body.

The *sting* of death is sin. Though dreadful in itself it is chiefly feared on account of the consciousness of guilt, and the impression that just and awful punishment awaits sinners after death. Hence the fear of death is dispelled by faith in Christ as the

Saviour, and Christians often triumph over it, saying: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE FUTURE STATE.

IMMORTALITY.

IF a man die, shall he live again? It is certainly *possible*. God, who created us and preserves us while we live, can as easily prolong our existence after death.

Nor is there any proof that death will be anything more than a change in the place and circumstances of our existence. After it we shall not exist in this world as at present, but, for aught we know, we shall exist.

The idea, too, that we shall exist after death accords with changes which we see taking place in the natural world. In the fall of the year the grass withers and seems to die, the trees drop off their fading leaves, and the whole vegetable world becomes apparently lifeless, but in the spring new life and fresh beauty appear. At one time, also, we see a loathsome worm crawling on the ground; soon it wraps itself in a covering which it makes for the purpose and dies. In a little while, however, it assumes new life, and becomes a beautiful butterfly. So man dies and wastes away—yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? But why should it be doubted that the same Almighty Being who changes the dreariness of winter into the freshness and beauty

of spring, and the loathsome caterpillars into beautiful and gay butterflies, will cause man, though he die, to live again, this corruptible to put on incorruption, and this mortal to put on immortality? Such analogy, indeed, is not positive proof of our future existence, but it shows that it is not improbable.

One reason for believing in a future existence is, that our thoughts, desires, hopes, and fears, extend beyond the present life. Who does not desire to exist after death? Who does not aspire after immortality?

“Immortal! Were but one immortal,
How would others envy! How would thrones adore!
'Tis immortality; 'tis that alone
The soul can comfort, elevate, and fill.”

Indeed, Milton not unnaturally represents even the fallen angels as preferring to exist in hell rather than not to exist, saying:

“To be no more! Sad cure; for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
To perish rather; swallowed up and lost,
Devoid of sense and motion?”

Certain it is that nothing but sin has extinguished in any one the desire and hope of immortality. There is no evidence that animals have any idea of a future existence. They have no thoughts or desires, no hopes or fears, extending beyond life. They never think of the flight of time, of the fashion of this world as passing away—they never think of death or eternity. Hence it makes no difference with

them whether they are immortal or not. But we think, and are often obliged to think of our life-time as passing away, of death as near at hand, and may we not reasonably extend our thoughts into eternity? If not, why are we so constituted that we cannot avoid it? It would be better to be like brutes, and have no desires and hopes extending beyond the present. Must we, then, look forward to death as the end of our existence? Since we have been endowed with intellectual power to extend our thoughts into eternity, to desire and hope for immortality, is it not reasonable to conclude that He who made us made us immortal? Even our fears respecting a future state, lest it may be accompanied with the dreadful consequences of sin, and be filled up with wretchedness and despair, point to scenes which lie beyond the boundaries of time.

Another reason for believing in a future existence is, that our minds are capable of vastly greater improvement than is ever attained on earth. The wisest men that ever lived were only as little children in knowledge and other attainments compared with what they might have become. There is no limit to human knowledge and perfection. Can we, then, believe that God designs to blot us out of being when we die? Will He not sooner blot out the sun than such intelligent and moral beings as we are?

We may, also, infer our future existence from the unsatisfactory results of life. If we consider it as connected with another life, if it is only the beginning of our existence, and is designed to prepare us

for a future state, then we should infer that the end of our being is the wisest and best that could be devised. But if death is an eternal sleep, and the soul as well as the body will soon mingle with the dust, life is a failure. Even heathen philosophers have reasoned more wisely than this: "I am persuaded," said one of them, "that such is the activity of the soul, such is its memory of the past, and its foresight of the future, and such its attainments, that it cannot be mortal."

Again, the justice of God demands a future state of existence. In this world the wicked are often very prosperous, and the righteous greatly afflicted. The guilty often escape punishment and the innocent suffer. Good men have been persecuted and put to death, and bad men been greatly honored. If there is a future state of reward and punishment this is no proof of injustice; but otherwise it would be difficult to reconcile many things in life with the righteous government of God.

Such are some of the arguments which reason alone furnishes in favor of the immortality of the soul. The Scriptures teach it so plainly that none can doubt it without rejecting their divine authority. It has been objected, indeed, that the Old Testament seldom refers to it. But it should be considered that this truth, so generally believed without the Bible, must have been familiar to the Jews, and did not need to be revealed to them. It should not be supposed that they had no other ideas respecting it than are expressed in the Old Testament. Besides,

the future state is clearly referred to in the Old Testament, and especially is implied in other truths which it teaches: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." "As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death." "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." Other passages refer to the resurrection of the body: "My flesh shall rest in hope; for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption." "Many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

In the New Testament the immortality of the soul is most clearly taught. Of Christ it is written: "Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." Though He did not first teach this truth, He brought it to light by teaching it much more clearly than it had been known before, and by teaching many new truths respecting it. "Fear not," he said, "them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Referring to the passage of Scripture, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," he added, "God is not the God

of the dead, but of the living." In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus He describes the condition of both after death. Also in various passages describing the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, the everlasting happiness of the righteous, and the everlasting punishment of the wicked, He refers to scenes beyond the grave and an endless existence.

The Gospel, though it leaves the impenitent and unbelieving in darkness and despair, in which all would have been without it, lightens up the pathway beyond the tomb to all true Christians, and conducts them at death away from all earthly cares and turmoils, away from temptation and sin, to a world of purity and eternal glory. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "We are willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord." "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

The Bible represents the soul after death as existing separate from the body until the resurrection. This is called the *intermediate state*. How and where does the soul exist? These questions cannot be de-

finitely answered, except in a few particulars. It does not exist, as some suppose, in an unconscious state like sleep. Though death is represented as sleep, only the body is referred to. The soul, though more or less affected by the body while connected with it, often retains its full consciousness till the last moment; and there is no proof that it then loses it. Even reason would lead us to believe that after breaking away from its tenement of clay it awakes to new consciousness of its immortality. According to the Bible, it soars on high attended by angels to the abode of the blessed, or sinks into utter misery and eternal despair. It goes immediately to heaven or to hell. Only these two places are mentioned in the Bible with reference to the dead. It teaches nothing about purgatory or any place for the wicked except hell, nor does it teach that there is any paradise for the righteous except heaven. We may conjecture much about the intermediate state, but all that we know is that when we die we shall go immediately to heaven or to hell. This is plainly taught by the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. "The beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Christians, on the other hand, are represented as willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord, and as having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; and those

who have died are represented as now in heaven with such men as Moses, Samuel, David, Paul, and all the redeemed. Their state and condition may be different in some respects after the resurrection, but they are already in heaven.

THE RESURRECTION.

The *resurrection of the dead* is an event which could not have been known without being revealed by God. It is evidently above reason, and even beyond human conjecture. Yet it is not unreasonable, but consistent with other religious truths, and being clearly taught in the Bible, ought to be believed. Indeed, it is properly represented by the Apostle Paul as a fundamental doctrine of Christianity: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen, and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." Such an event is certainly possible. God can as easily raise the dead as He at first created them. Nor are the Scriptural representations of such a scene absurd. What men imagine respecting it may be absurd and often ridiculous, and we should consider that the reality will, doubtless, far transcend the most vivid descriptions of it in human language, and differ widely from our best conceptions of what is taught, yet it is a reality solemn and momentous beyond the power of human language to express.

The Bible clearly teaches that the dead will be

raised. We cited some passages from the Old Testament to prove the immortality of the soul which refer particularly to the resurrection of the body, and it was so generally believed by the Jews that only a small sect, the Sadducees, denied it. Christ taught it most clearly : "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." "I am the resurrection and the life." The apostles, it is also written, preached through Christ the resurrection of the dead. The Apostle Paul particularly said : "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question ;" and wrote, "I have hope towards God that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others who have no hope ; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first." The Apostle John, too, foretelling this event, wrote : "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them."

The *same* body that dies and decays will be raised, but it will be greatly changed. It is not essential that it shall be composed of precisely the same particles of matter, or have precisely the same form, since in these respects it constantly changes before death; but it will be the body of the same person, and be recognized as the same body. The bodies of Christians especially will be vastly superior to those they have on earth. They will be no longer liable to fatigue, infirmities, sickness, pain, or death, but will possess immortal life, beauty, and vigor. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption." They will be glorious bodies, since we are taught that Christ will change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. "It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory." They will be vastly more powerful after the resurrection than before, so that the redeemed in heaven will be as represented equal to the angels. "It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." They will also be spiritual bodies. "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "Now this I say, brethren, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption. So when this corruption shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave,

where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

It may seem to some that the resurrection of the body, through which so many temptations to sin beset us, and in which we have suffered so much, is not desirable, but the victory over sin will not be complete till the body, as well as the soul, shall be redeemed from its power and restored to that state of perfection and enjoyment for which it was first created. Though, too, Christians will be perfectly happy immediately after death, constituted as we are we shall not attain to the highest perfection of our being till the glorious hour shall come, when we shall hear the voice of the Son of man bidding us see what we are now waiting for, the redemption of our body.

The Bible does not speak particularly of the bodies of the wicked after the resurrection, except that they will be raised. It may be reasonably inferred, however, that as sin tends to degrade the body as well as the soul, their bodies will be in striking contrast with those of the righteous, and be fitted for their state of condemnation. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still." "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption."

THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

We have already considered the subject of human responsibility, and this naturally leads men to anticipate a judgment of some kind, though not such as is foretold in the Scriptures. Only the Judge Himself could have disclosed that solemn scene, thus:

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” The same scene is also described in Revelation. “And I saw the dead small and great stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.” “So then,” it is also written, “every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” “It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.” “God shall judge the righteous and the wicked.” “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

Our conceptions of what the Bible teaches respecting the final judgment are of course imperfect, and may be in many respects false; but as was remarked respecting the resurrection, the reality will doubtless far transcend the most vivid description of the scene.

Some things respecting it are plain. God in Christ will judge the world in righteousness. The same Being who is now the Saviour of sinners will be their final Judge. The judgment will be at the end of the world. The day appointed or the time allotted for it will be sufficient. All will be judged and all will be pronounced righteous or wicked, not as they now appear to themselves or others, but as they appear to the Searcher of all hearts. The judgment will be impartial, and be approved by all, even the wicked. The test of character will be true love and devotion to Christ, the Judge, according to his Gospel, also according to the opportunities afforded, and the amount of knowledge possessed. "Inasmuch," he will say, "as ye have done it, or did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it, or did it not to me." Even the heathen will be without excuse, "for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood from the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. Which show the work of the law written on their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." But it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for those cities where Christ preached and wrought miracles, or any of the impenitent who have heard the Gospel. "Especially," as another writer has expressed it, "the measure of our responsibility is vastly greater. We walk amid a clearer light than is remitted from these resplend-

ent heavens; we hear louder, fuller, and more impressive voices, than any which proceed from the hills and the valleys, the woods and the waters. The Revelation which has come to us direct from the throne of the Eternal, places us on a ground of responsibility higher far than that of the most gifted sage who had no other light than the glimmering light of nature." "Unto whomsoever much is given, of the same much shall be required."

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED.

At the close of the judgment the sentence of Justice will be executed. The penalty of sin will be inflicted on the guilty. The wicked will be punished. Whatever their punishment may be, it will be *just*. The righteous Judge will not inflict an unrighteous penalty. It greatly mitigates one's pain or misery to feel that he suffers unjustly, or that his sufferings are unmerited. There will be no such mitigation of the punishment of the wicked. It will be *just*.

This truth misapplied satisfies many persons in a good degree while they live. All they expect is to be treated justly, and not be punished more severely than they deserve. But what satisfies them now, will not satisfy them at the judgment seat of Christ. Often their fears are excited in life, and especially in the hour of death. Many who had long been careless and unconcerned, have been so convicted of their guilt that they have tremblingly asked "What must I do to be saved?" Such conviction of guilt will be much clearer and deeper at the judgment, so that

such punishment as they would now pronounce unjust, they will then feel to be perfectly just.

The future punishment of the wicked will be *inconceivably dreadful*. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power." "And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life, was cast into the lake of fire." "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever."

Admitting that such language, as well as that describing the happiness of the righteous in heaven, is much of it figurative, yet it is used to express truth, and there is no reason to think that it means less than its literal import, but rather much more. The righteous would be sadly disappointed to find heaven only a city whose walls are jasper, the gates pearls, and the streets pure gold as it were transparent glass. They expect something far superior to that, and which language cannot describe. So the language used to depict the future misery of the wicked does not exaggerate it, but fails to express the truth. Here, again, our conceptions are of course imperfect, and may be in many respects false, but the awful reality surpasses them.

Many minds, doubtless, are prejudiced against the

idea of future punishment, by often hearing alarming expressions respecting it without perceiving their true meaning, though the truth itself is still more alarming. The expressions alone seem extravagant, and the ideas they suggest unnatural and forbidding, while the truth which they really teach, clearly perceived, commends itself to the consciences of men, and is fitted to guard them against temptation and sin, also warns them to flee from the wrath to come. What then, let us inquire, does the Bible plainly teach, and what does our moral nature require us to believe respecting the future punishment of the wicked?

It is plain that *the wicked will be excluded from heaven*, deprived of the favor of God, and separated from all holy beings. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie." "The Judge shall say unto them on His left hand, Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Otherwise heaven would not be heaven; its joy would be extinguished, and its glory forever eclipsed. The wicked, too, would be miserable even there. What then will be their condition? "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out."

The wicked, too, will be condemned to hell. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." The word *hell* often means only the place of departed spirits, whether holy or sinful,

but in the passage just cited and others, it evidently means the opposite of heaven, and a place of punishment. In the original Greek different words are used to express these different meanings. Whatever may be the nature or the degree of the punishment in other respects, to be confined in any place designed for the punishment of the wicked, must be inconceivably dreadful. There is misery enough in this world, beautiful and attractive as it is, yet it is not hell. Admitting that the Scriptural representations of that place are more or less figurative, is any one certain that the reality is less dreadful; that it is not better to cut off a right hand, or to pluck out a right eye, than to be cast into hell; or that it is not far better to lose one's life than to lose one's soul?

The wicked in hell *will at least be deprived of their present sources of enjoyment*. This alone must make them extremely unhappy, far more so than they ever are in this world. We are so constituted that we cannot be happy, and must be very miserable away from the objects which we love most, especially if we cannot hope to possess and enjoy them again. Let a man whose property constitutes his principal source of enjoyment lose it all, and have no prospect of accumulating more; how will he feel? Generally, indeed, when a person loses one source of enjoyment he has many others left, and if he is a Christian he has a treasure laid up in heaven. But let him lose everything that he values. Seize a man with violence, and force him away from his home, his family, and his friends, his business and pleasures, and confine

him in a place where he can neither enjoy nor hope to enjoy them any more; this alone would make any of the wicked utterly miserable, for it would deprive them of all their present enjoyment. Since they love the world supremely, and are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, they cannot be happy anywhere out of the world, and away from its pursuits and pleasures. Hence they will be utterly miserable in hell.

Let a person, whose affections are all wrapped up in this world, think of his prospects for eternity. He can enjoy the world while he lives, but soon the cold grasp of death will seize hold of him. Then he will suspend his business, bequeath his property to others, bid his family and friends farewell, quit his home, and leave the world forever. Soon his body will moulder into dust, but in what condition will his soul be; happy or miserable? What conclusion is most reasonable?

The wicked will also be miserable in hell because *they will still be wicked*. "The wicked is driven away *in his wickedness*." "He that is unjust, let him be *unjust still*, and he that is filthy, let him be *filthy still*."

Sin is naturally connected with misery. We can no more take fire into our bosoms without pain, than we can indulge in sin without sorrow and woe. We are not apt to consider how much disquietude and wretchedness it produces in this world. We are often unhappy, and wonder why we feel so, when we might trace it to our sinfulness. Sin in various forms, such

as pride, envy, jealousy, anger, revenge, avarice, ambition, and beastly appetites, corrupts our moral nature, and torments our souls even while we live. In hell these evil propensities and wicked passions will naturally render the condition of the wicked inconceivably more wretched. There is nothing in the death of the body to prevent the death of the soul, but only to ensure the second death. It ends the season of probation, and deprives the wicked of the means of grace, so that they will only wax worse and worse in eternity. They often make rapid strides in wickedness even in this world, where there are so many restraining influences. How fearful then is the abyss into which they plunge when they die! It will not, indeed, be *absolutely impossible* for them to repent after death, but it will be *absolutely certain* that they will not. Having preferred sin to holiness all their lifetime, their choice will never be altered; their characters will be fixed; they will naturally be wicked forever, and consequently forever miserable.

Another source of misery to the wicked in hell will be *the consciousness of guilt*. This makes all more or less unhappy in this life. Who has not spent many unhappy moments in reflecting on his sins? A consciousness of moral imperfection or guilt, often makes the best of men very unhappy, especially if they are accustomed to think how they must appear in the sight of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who cannot look on iniquity. In many instances the misery which results from a conscious-

ness of guilt is almost beyond endurance even in this world. It has led a great many to commit suicide. Judas was so distressed with a sense of his guilt in betraying Christ, that he went and hung himself. Yet he was not so much worse than many others. A great many have betrayed their Saviour for less than thirty pieces of silver. Persons, too, who have always been remarkably amiable and upright, have in numerous instances been so convicted of their sinfulness that they could not sleep and were in awful despair. Others are careless and unconcerned, partly because they do not consider how great their guilt is, and partly because they drown their convictions in worldly pursuits and pleasures. But after the judgment, it will be impossible to avoid conviction of sin; and "the sting of death is sin." The consequences of sin travel on beyond the time when it is committed, and the same sins which to-day are disregarded or forgotten, afterwards occasion intense anguish. The scenes beyond the grave, especially, will naturally awaken conviction of sin in the minds of the wicked, so that when they awake at the resurrection, they will awake to shame and everlasting contempt. Then it will not require literal flames of fire to torment them. They will be in worse torments, when, in the light of eternity, they reflect on their sins, especially in despising the proffered grace of God, and rejecting Christ as their Saviour.

Again, the wicked will be miserable in hell because they will be *the companions of the devil and his angels*. It would be dreadful to live in some commu-

nities in this world, in dens of vice such as may be found in large cities, where only oaths and blasphemies are heard, and there is scarcely a vestige of virtue or morality. How dreadful it must have been to live in Sodom and Gomorrah ! The wicked even in this world are often a terror to each other. If they do not bite and devour one another, they have envyings, jealousies, hatred, and strife among them, so that they destroy each others peace and happiness. But it will be inconceivably more dreadful to be the companions of the devil and his angels. Worse than flames of fire will be the torments of wicked companions in the world of despair.

Besides all this, the wicked in hell will be under the *awful displeasure and curse of God*. Even in this world, where His love and mercy are so abundantly displayed, He has also manifested His hatred of sin by His awful judgments. "He spared not the old world, except Noah and his family, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." "He rained fire and brimstone from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah." He has often sent wars, famines, and pestilences upon men for their wickedness, and He greatly afflicts even the righteous for their sins, as long as they live. Such calamities and afflictions are not generally regarded as manifesting God's hatred of sin, but according to the Bible such is their design. Much more will the wicked be the objects of his awful displeasure and curse after the day of salvation shall be passed, and the great day of His wrath shall come. Then "they will call to the moun-

tains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

Since, too, the wicked after the resurrection will have bodies, they will be liable to *bodily sufferings* for their sins, even greater than in this world, and it is no more improbable that what is written respecting the Lord Jesus being revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be literally fulfilled, than it was that God would destroy the old world with the deluge, or Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone. As, also, sin naturally leads to bodily sufferings in this life, causing pain, sickness, and death, so it may reasonably be inferred that it will be the occasion of greater bodily sufferings in eternity. This, indeed, is clearly implied in the passage of Scripture, "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption."

The punishment of the wicked, so dreadful in itself, will be *eternal*. "These shall go away into *everlasting* punishment." "Who shall be punished with *everlasting* destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power." "And the smoke of their torments ascendeth up *forever and ever*." It is true that such words as *everlasting*, *eternal*, and *forever* are sometimes limited in their meaning, but in all such cases they are applied to things that are known to be limited in their nature, and they generally mean an endless duration, so that they should

always be understood in this sense, unless their meaning is necessarily restricted by the nature of the subjects to which they are applied. The same words are used to express the duration of future punishment, and of future happiness. If they do not mean an endless duration in the one case, they do not in the other. If, too, they do not express it, the idea cannot possibly be expressed, and no truth is plainly taught in the Bible. But most of its readers always have understood it as plainly teaching that the future punishment of the wicked will be endless, and it is not probable that so many have mistaken its meaning on this subject, and so few have discovered it, or that there ever will be any essential change in the prevailing belief, that everlasting punishment means in the Bible endless punishment as certainly as endless means endless.

The principal reason given for limiting the meaning of such words as everlasting, eternal, and forever, as applied to the future punishment of the wicked, is that such punishment would be unjust and cruel. But this is presuming that the guilty are proper judges of themselves, and that the disclosures of the judgment day cannot deepen their convictions of sin. Besides, it is a very common impression that sinners do not, and never can deserve to be admitted into heaven, and that some of the wicked at least deserve, and always will deserve, more severe punishment than they suffer in this world. Most persons feel that the immoral and vicious, thieves, murderers, and such like persons, might justly be excluded from hea-

ven forever. It is not unjust to treat the guilty differently from the innocent, and since sinners can never cease to be guilty, it can never be unjust to punish them. The degree of punishment, indeed, should be proportional to their guilt, and doubtless will be, but endless guilt may justly be accompanied with endless punishment, and the greater the guilt, the more dreadful the punishment.

It should be considered, also, that the wicked after death *will never cease to be wicked*, and therefore will deserve endless punishment. They will continue in sin, not indeed necessarily, but as certainly as they will continue to exist. The means of grace will no longer be employed, and the influences of the Holy Spirit will no longer be exerted; nor is there any tendency in mere punishment to make sinners holy; therefore as represented in the Bible, they will be forever sinful, even more so than in this life, and consequently will be justly punished forever.

To avoid this conclusion, some have adopted the opinion that the wicked will be annihilated at death, or after the final judgment, and perhaps still later, after suffering severe punishment for a very long period. Eternal death, it has been affirmed, means the opposite of eternal existence, and the everlasting destruction of the wicked will be nothing more than the extinction of their being forever in some dreadful manner, as by fire. This, too, has been called everlasting punishment, though there would be none left in existence to be punished. The idea is absurd. Who would have thought of calling annihilation,

which might be effected in a moment, everlasting punishment, except for the purpose of reconciling a preconceived opinion with the language of Scripture? It is evident that the wicked cannot be punished any longer than they shall exist. Their everlasting punishment necessarily involves their everlasting existence.

The goodness of God has been considered as inconsistent with the endless punishment of the wicked. It is admitted, perhaps, that it is not inconsistent with the introduction of sin and misery for a limited period, but it is affirmed that they must not be allowed to prevail forever. It may often seem so; but is it certain? Are there not abundant proofs of God's goodness in his works of creation and providence, also abundant proofs of his boundless compassion and mercy in the Gospel, though he threatens to punish the impenitent and unbelieving with everlasting destruction? The Gospel, indeed, is consistent only with the idea that men as sinners are justly exposed to such punishment, and that none can escape it except by repentance, and through faith in Christ as their only Saviour. Otherwise, there was no need of salvation, and Christ suffered and died in vain.

The truth thus presented is indeed dreadful to contemplate; but there have been and are dreadful realities in life which should lead us to expect more dreadful realities to come, if we neglect the great salvation. Cities overthrown by earthquakes, or burned with fire; wars, famines, and pestilences; disease, pain, and death are dreadful, but they have

prevailed ; so the future punishment of the wicked will be a reality, though inconceivably dreadful to suffer or even to contemplate. It is evidently necessary, since sin would otherwise be committed with very little restraint. Though holiness is more conducive to happiness than sin, there is not difference enough in this world to lead sinners to repentance. What would be the effect of preaching that there is no future or eternal punishment, if all should believe it? Though the theory of some is, that it would make men better by impressing them with a sense of God's infinite goodness, facts show that they despise his goodness if they have no fear of his justice, except as displayed in this world. As the welfare of society requires prisons for the punishment of criminals, so the greatest good of all moral beings requires the everlasting punishment of the wicked. Hence, though God has declared, "As I live I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ;" though "He so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life," it is written, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." It is enough that there is a glorious salvation for all, and that the Gospel proclaims the message, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

THE FUTURE HAPPINESS OF CHRISTIANS.

We have already considered that Christians at death immediately enter heaven, at the resurrection will appear with spiritual and glorious bodies, and at the judgment will stand on the right hand of the Judge among the righteous who shall enter into life eternal. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." This leads us to consider their *future happiness*.

Heaven itself, whether a place or only a state, is perfectly fitted to render holy beings happy. It is represented as a *place*, and since Christians will have bodies after their resurrection, there must be some place for their abode. It is represented as a city whose walls are jasper, the gates pearls, and the streets pure gold as it were transparent glass. "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Our best conceptions of what such a description means are, of course, very vague and imperfect, and may be in many respects false, but the reality will far surpass them. Our conjectures respecting heaven may, or may not, be altogether vain, but they are unreal, because the real heaven is inconceivable. We can better conceive of some things pertaining to it than of the place, because that we have never seen, but of these we may have a foretaste on earth.

The happiness of Christians in heaven will be derived partly from their superior intelligence. Now their minds are clogged by their weak, frail, and

decaying bodies, and the circumstances in which they live are unfavorable to their mental growth. Though a few are distinguished for superior intellects and great learning, the mass of mind lies in a great measure dormant, and is degraded with sin. In heaven every thing will be favorable to the full development of their minds, and as soon as they enter that world of light their intellectual powers will be enlarged and rapidly expand, so that they will become vastly superior to what they are in this world.

One thing which will effect such a change in their minds will be their increased and more perfect knowledge of God. "Now they see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now they know in part, but then they will know even as they are known." "This is life eternal, to know God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent." Thus they will soon become far superior to any in this world who are distinguished for their intellectual powers and attainments. As, also, they increase in the knowledge of God and spiritual things, their happiness will increase, and they will delight more and more in the contemplation of the Infinite One and the study of His works, especially the mystery of redemption.

Another source of happiness in heaven will be perfect holiness. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Now their light is beclouded or mingled with the darkness of sin, then it will be like the sun shining in full splendor at noon. When they shall be delivered from the control of their depraved

bodily appetites and passions, their souls already renewed, also hungering and thirsting after righteousness will be filled, and they will be free from all imperfection, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, and holy as the angels. They will have washed their robes, and made them white and clean in the blood of the Lamb. This is the highest source of happiness to moral beings, and their greatest glory. God is glorious in holiness and blessed for ever, and so will Christians be in heaven so far as they shall be like Him.

The chief source of happiness to Christians in heaven will be communion with God. To others this means very little. They have less desire for it than savages have for enlightened and refined society. But to Christians it is sweet even on earth, the source of their purest and most satisfactory enjoyment. Yet it is very imperfect here compared with what it will be in heaven. Many things, especially their remaining sinfulness prevents them from ever enjoying it fully, and it is often interrupted. "Oh, for a closer walk with God!" expresses their longing for such communion with Him as they hope to enjoy in heaven. The foretaste of this which they sometimes have in drawing near to God in His sanctuary or in secret, is a pledge of far sweeter and purer joy in His presence above.

God in Christ will be the object of supreme delight to Christians in heaven. He is precious to them now. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice

with joy unspeakable and full of glory." It will be far better to depart and be with Christ, to see Him as He is, to dwell with Him. An affectionate wife is most happy with her husband. When absent she longs to be with him. So the bride, the Lamb's wife, will rejoice when she shall go to take up her abode with Him for ever.

In heaven, also, Christians will enjoy the society of holy angels and the redeemed. The society of esteemed friends on earth is a source of great satisfaction and pleasure. Especially, how delightful it would be if there were no selfishness and sin to embitter human happiness! If all men were holy, how much would the joy of social life be increased! It would be like heaven on earth. In heaven, such social enjoyment will be experienced. Christians will there associate with holy angels and with the redeemed from among men, with the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and all who shall be judged faithful. The best society on earth is not worthy to be compared with that of celestial beings; and the company of angels, and the redeemed in heaven will be most delightful—beyond the power of language to express or the imagination to conceive.

An additional source of enjoyment to Christians in heaven will be their employments. Though they will enter into that rest which remains for the people of God, it will only be rest from the cares and turmoils of life, from toil and fatigue, from trouble, disquietude, pain, and sorrow. They will not be inactive, but constantly and pleasantly employed in

whatever will best promote the glory of God, and their own highest good or that of others.

They will be directly employed, more or less, in the worship of God. This is a source of great satisfaction and pleasure to them in this world, though imperfectly rendered, so that they are often prompted to say, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." How much more delightful will it be to unite with the angels and saints above who worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

But it should not be supposed that the inhabitants of heaven are only engaged in the worship of God. They doubtless have various other employments in doing His will. As intelligent beings capable of acquiring knowledge without limit, they will naturally be thus employed in eternity. There will be enough to study. The nature and character of God, of whom they now know so little, and desire to know so much, but whom they can never know perfectly, they will study with ever-increasing satisfaction and delight as they shall make new discoveries of His power, wisdom, and goodness. The history of redemption by Christ will be an exhaustless theme of contemplation. They will, also, learn with wonder, gratitude and praise, what they understand so imperfectly in

this world, the benevolent purposes of God in His providential dispensations in respect to themselves and others. While, too, they become familiar with the history of God's government on earth, which will chiefly interest them instead of the written history of kings and nations, their knowledge will probably be extended to other worlds at which astronomers gaze with so much vain curiosity through telescopes, and the history of them, numberless as the sands on the sea-shore, will ever occupy and interest their minds.

But, as may be reasonably inferred, Christians in heaven will be chiefly engaged in doing good. This is their appropriate work on earth, and God himself has always been and always will be doing good. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is better to do good than to receive good from others. Mutual good-will and kindness exhibited in action, love expressing itself in good deeds, is the crowning glory of intelligent and moral beings, and the source of their highest happiness. How much, or how long the inhabitants of heaven will be engaged in reclaiming the miserable and lost as in this world, is uncertain, but there will always be ways and opportunities for doing good. If all within their sphere of action are holy, happy, and secure from evil, yet it will be possible, by mutual good deeds, to contribute to and increase each others happiness. Indeed the happiness of holy beings must consist chiefly in the good which each one does to others.

All this is only a glimpse of the future happiness

of Christians in heaven. Language fails to give more than an obscure view of it. We should, therefore, consider it as far superior to any descriptions, inconceivably great and glorious. There are, also, some considerations which are fitted to make it appear still more desirable.

One is, that it will satisfy the most enlarged desires of the soul. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be *filled*." "I shall be *satisfied*," said the Psalmist, "when I awake in thy likeness." In this world there is nothing satisfactory. The greatest amount of temporal good, if secured, would leave an aching void in the soul. The world cannot fill it. But Christians in heaven will be satisfied. They will be no more discontented or pine for more substantial good. All that they can desire they will then enjoy.

The happiness of Christians in heaven will also be everlasting. "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away." In this world every thing is uncertain and changeable. Those who now stand on the pinnacle of fame may to-morrow be stripped of their honors; or those who enjoy the greatest prosperity may very soon be reduced to poverty and want. "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever," and the happiness of heaven will be everlasting. After myriads of ages shall have rolled away, the righteous will still shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. "Beholding," too, "as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, they will be

changed into the same image from glory to glory," ever increasing in holiness and happiness.

G O D G L O R I F I E D .

"The heavens declare the glory of God." This is seldom doubted, and can never be disproved. His glory shines every where, only it is greatly obscured where sin prevails. Sinners impeach His goodness, and even doubt and deny His existence, chiefly because He has permitted them to sin, and visited their sins with tokens of His displeasure. But it has appeared, and will more clearly appear hereafter, that sinners only are responsible for their sins, and that God would have been glorified if He had condemned them all to everlasting destruction. But He has glorified Himself still more by displaying His infinite mercy in the redemption of mankind, in so loving the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish but have everlasting life, assuming a human nature that He might suffer and die, the just for the unjust; also through the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit in renewing and sanctifying those who are heirs of salvation. It is true the fallen angels and impenitent men have been left to suffer the just punishment of sin, but what He has done to save sinners clearly proves that He has no pleasure in their death, and has been compelled, in the one case by a regard for His holy law, and in the other by their own rejection of His proffered grace, to condemn them to hell for ever. Yet the prison of despair is small compared

with the vast universe which He governs, and is only designed to guard holy beings against sin, and to confirm them in their allegiance to the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Every where outside of the world of eternal woe there will be joy throughout the vast, and for aught we know, infinite universe, springing from the Infinite Source of all good. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. AMEN."

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FUTURE HAPPINESS.—[P. 218.] Math. 13:43; Rev. 21:23; [p. 219.] 2 Cor. 13:12; John 17:3; Prov. 4:18; [p. 224.] Math. 5:6.

QUESTIONS.

[THE answers should be full, including the leading ideas on the particular subject or topic under consideration. Parents and teachers should ask other questions.]

THEOLOGY.—(Page 9.) What is Theology? Why important?

GOD.—Has some idea of God always been prevalent? What is the simplest idea of such a Being? On what does the credibility of truths respecting God depend? Is mathematical proof to be expected? Is absolute certainty to be required? What reasons are sufficient for believing such truths? Can truth be doubted? Why are truths respecting God often doubted?

EXISTENCE OF GOD.—(P. 10.) Why is the idea of God an evidence of his existence? Why is the general belief of mankind an evidence? (P. 11.) From what are the most satisfactory proofs derived? What passages are quoted with reference to it? and why are they appropriate apart from the idea of their inspiration? Why should we not believe that uncreated matter has always existed? (P. 12.) What are proofs of the existence of mind distinct from matter? of the infinite Mind—God? How are we witnesses of God's existence? Can a child learn this? How does a statue illustrate it? (P. 13.) In what respects are our bodies proofs of it? How are such proofs multiplied? in the eye? illustrated by the telescope? other members of the body? (P. 14.) How do our minds prove the existence of the Divine Mind? What are the evidences around us? (P. 15.) How multiplied? What are the evidences seen in the heavens—the vast universe? (P. 16.) What verse is quoted to express the conviction that there is a God? Why is this truth the source of great satisfaction to many? of great comfort? peace? consolation? joy? (P. 17.) What hath the fool said in his heart? What should we say?

THE BIBLE THE WORD OF GOD.—(P. 18.) Why important to know?

INSPIRATION.—On what does the authority of the Bible chiefly depend? What is Inspiration? Apart from it, does the Bible claim our belief? Why? (P. 19.) Do we need to inquire in what respects or how the Bible was first inspired? Was inspiration desirable? why? possible? why? probable? why? What kinds of evidences are there that the Bible is inspired? What are Internal Evidences? External?

INTERNAL EVIDENCES.—(P. 20.) Why could not the Bible have been written by inspired men? How does the knowledge of God derived from the Bible prove its inspiration? [Repeat the passages quoted.] (P. 21.) The plan of salvation? justification by faith? (p. 22.) regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit? (p. 23.) the resurrection of the body, the judgment, and the future state of the righteous and the wicked? its spirit? (p. 24.) its perfect standard of morality? (p. 25.) the religion it teaches and cherishes? (p. 26.) its adaptation to our spiritual wants? (p. 27.) the only worthy end of existence it reveals?

EXTERNAL EVIDENCES.—(P. 28.) How does it appear that Biblical History is true apart from inspiration? What has been the prevailing opinion of the best judges? (P. 29.) Who are some of them? What writers are mentioned who have collected abundant evidences of the truth and inspiration of the Bible? Why were not the writers of the Bible deceived? Why must the New Testament have been written at the time specified and by the writers named? Why could they not have been impostors? (P. 30.) What were the principal facts they related? Could they have believed such facts if false? Could they have persuaded others to believe them? How does the existence of churches prove the truths of the Gospel? How do the Lord's Supper and Christian Sabbath confirm the death and resurrection of Christ?

MIRACLES.—(P. 31.) How does the resurrection of Christ confirm the other miracles of the New Testament? Are such miracles proofs of the truths taught? Does the New Testament confirm the Old Testament?

PROPHECY.—(P. 32.) Could uninspired men have predicted such events as were predicted in the Bible long before they were ful-

filled? What is written respecting the Jews? how long ago? how fulfilled? (P. 33.) What was written respecting Christ? how fulfilled? (P. 34.) Do the Scriptures claim to be inspired? Repeat the passages quoted. How are the truths of the Bible confirmed by science (Geology, Astronomy)? by antiquarian researches, ancient ruins, etc.? (P. 35.) Are errors in copies and translations inconsistent with the inspiration of the Bible? By whom have they been guarded against? Do they essentially affect the meaning? How, then, should the Bible be regarded?

THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF GOD.—(P. 37.) Is there more than *one* God? What answer does reason give? Repeat the passages of Scripture quoted. Does the Bible reveal God as in some respects different Persons? their names? (p. 38.) in what respects as the Father? Why should we believe that Christ is God? (P. 39.) Why is the Holy Spirit to be regarded as God? (P. 40.) What is God? [Answer given in the Catechism.] What is He, as a spirit? In what respects is He like us? Why are bodily members ascribed to Him? What belongs to Him as a Spirit? Why should we believe that God is eternal? (p. 41.) omnipotent? in respect to physical, (p. 42.) moral and spiritual power? (p. 43.) omniscient? including the foreknowledge of human thoughts and volitions? (p. 44.) omnipresent? (p. 45.) unchangeable? What are such attributes of God called? (P. 46.) What are his moral perfections? What is God called to express his moral character? Explain how love includes holiness, justice, goodness, etc.? Why should we believe that God is holy? (p. 47.) just? (p. 48.) good? (p. 51.) merciful? (p. 52.) true and faithful?

PURPOSES.—(P. 53.) Why should we believe that God has *purposes*? that they are *eternal*? (p. 54.) extend to every person and all things? Are difficulties and objections inconsistent with them? Do they compel men to be holy or sinful? (P. 55.) Do they interfere with the free agency of moral beings like men? How may we learn what some of the purposes of God are? What seems to be his chief purpose? For what does the material universe seem to be designed?

PROVIDENCE OF GOD.—(P. 55.) What is meant by the Providence of God? What are some of the different opinions of men respecting it? (P. 56.) Which includes the idea of a general Providence?

which, of a particular Providence? Can there be a general Providence without a particular Providence? In what respects does a particular Providence honor God? (P. 57.) Repeat the passages of Scripture which are quoted to prove the Providence of God. What instances related in the Bible illustrate this truth? (P. 58.) What common objection is urged? What is a sufficient answer?

THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.—(P. 59.) What is it? What are moral beings? how distinguished from animals? What chiefly constitutes a moral being? What is the character of all moral beings? By what is it determined? When is any one holy? when sinful? Are there different degrees of holiness or sinfulness? Why? (P. 60.) To whom are all accountable? Why is this right and just? How does it appear? [Let the answer include what is said respecting the moral sense—the condition of the world without it—the passages of Scripture quoted.] (P. 62.) What is required of all moral beings? How has the will of God been made known? What comprehends it?

HOLY ANGELS.—(P. 62.) What was the character of all moral beings when first created? What have we been taught respecting the *number* of holy angels? (p. 63.) their superiority? their power and activity? (p. 64.) their acquaintance with human affairs? How should the knowledge of such beings be regarded by us? and influence us?

FALLEN ANGELS.—(P. 65.) What does the Bible teach respecting the fallen angels? their number? their Chief? Have we been taught how they became sinful? (P. 66.) Is God the Author of sin? Where must it have originated? Are all finite moral beings liable to sin? why? Do we *know* that there could have been a wiser and better moral government without any sin? What should we infer from the existence of sin? Is it certain that holy beings are not properly exposed to temptations? Do not many things which are sources of temptation contribute to the highest perfection of moral beings? (P. 67.) What is the influence of temptation when overcome? Would it have been better if God had not permitted the angels to be tempted? Though tempted, were they compelled to sin? What is the influence of the knowledge of evil as the consequence of sin? (P. 68.) Do we know that God could have created moral beings so that none would have sinned, except

very inferior beings? May sin be overruled for the greatest good? Would it have been better if God had not created any moral beings or only very inferior beings? Was sin necessary? How does God evidently regard it? Who is responsible for it? Is it any evidence against the wisdom, goodness or holiness of God?

CREATION OF MAN.—(P. 69.) What does the Bible teach respecting the creation of man? like whom? where placed? for what purpose? What was he forbidden to do? why probably? (P. 70.) Was he unjustly exposed to temptation? Was the temptation too great? Were Adam and Eve compelled to sin? Did any eternal decree of God render it necessary for them to eat the forbidden fruit? What, if they had resisted the temptation? (P. 71.) What was the result of their temptation? Repeat the passages quoted from the Bible: also from *Paradise Lost*. What was the character and state of our first parents after they first sinned? How were they changed? Was this the death of which they were forewarned? What is it often called? (P. 72.) Does the proper penalty of sin include sinfulness? Is there a natural connection between one sinful act and succeeding acts? What often results? What other consequences followed the sin of our first parents?

THE SINFULNESS OF MEN IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE FALL.—(P. 72.) Are all men sinful? How is sin regarded by some? by others? (P. 73.) How did the fall of our first parents affect their posterity? What passages are quoted from the Bible to prove this? Is sinfulness inherited more certainly than diseases, etc.? What controversy has there been respecting the guilt of Adam's sin? owing chiefly to what? (P. 74.) Can we be guilty of it as we are of our own sins? Repeat the passages of Scripture quoted with reference to it? Are any compelled to sin? Is all sin voluntary? Would it have been better if each one had been put on trial for himself? Why not?

MEN NATURALLY DESTITUTE OF HOLINESS.—(P. 75.) Are men naturally destitute of holiness? Do all possess many good qualities? Are many highly virtuous and useful? What is the distinction between morality or virtue and holiness? Illustration. (P. 76.) In what respects are men destitute of holiness? Quotations from the Bible. Of what particular sins are all men naturally guilty?

Are they apt to be conscious of them? Why not? (P. 77.) How do they naturally feel towards God as revealed in the Bible rightly understood? What have many said of such a Being? What does the history of mankind prove? the heathen? the Jews? Atheists and Infidels? Sabbath desecration? profanity? gross vices and crimes? (P. 78.) Even in respect to virtue and morality, what are men naturally? Are the heathen naturally worse than others? Quotations from Scripture.

NATURAL AND PENAL CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.—(P. 78.) What does sin produce? in what forms? (P. 79.) Is this apt to be realized? What were the natural consequences of sin to our first parents? (p. 80.) what are they to all? how mitigated? Will it be so always?

SELF-JUSTIFICATION IMPOSSIBLE.—(P. 81.) What is Justification with God? How are holy beings justified? How can sinners be justified? Do men often attempt to justify themselves? How did Adam? Eve? how do some now? others? Why are not such excuses sufficient? (P. 82.) Do men accept of them from others? What is another method of self-justification? Why is it difficult? Quotations of Scripture. Is it admissible in human governments? (P. 83.) Illustration? Why much less on the part of sinners? Quotations of Scripture. What method of self-justification is next considered? Whence was the idea probably derived? how perverted? What religious observances are much relied on? (P. 84.) Quotations of Scripture referring to them. What is the plea for justice? Is it satisfactory to most persons? Is it the common impression received from the Bible? (P. 85.) What is the plea for mercy alone? why not satisfactory? for justice in part and mercy in part? why unsatisfactory?

THE ATONEMENT.—(P. 86.) What is an atonement? *The atonement?* When did God purpose it? the first intimation of it? how foreshadowed? Quotation of Scripture referring to it? Has its necessity been felt? Hence originated, what? (P. 87.) Whence has arisen the impression of its necessity? Why was it necessary? On what principle of justice was it made? Illustration. How does it fulfill its design? (P. 88.) In what consists the efficacy of the atonement? Did the blood of bulls and goats atone for sin? If Christ is not God as well as man, could he have made an atone-

ment? Why is the divinity of Christ an essential truth of the Gospel? How should the sufferings and death of Christ as the Son of God be regarded? Why is such an atonement sufficient? How does Abraham's readiness to sacrifice Isaac illustrate the love of God in the sacrifice of his Son? (P. 89.) How did the atonement display both the justice and the mercy of God? How shall we answer the objection that the future punishment of sinners would be unjust? Or that God is unmerciful if he designs to inflict it? (P. 90.) Quotations of Scripture expressing his love. For whom is the atonement efficacious? Are they justified by it? Quotations of Scripture. Are all justified by Christ? Why not? How does unbelief affect the guilt of sinners? Quotation of Scripture referring to such. (P. 91.) Is the atonement limited or unlimited? Will all be saved by it? Is it sufficient for all? Is it designed for all, so that all might be saved by it? Quotations of Scripture.

CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.—(P. 91.) How typified? Quotations of Scripture referring to it. (P. 92.) Why necessary? Illustration. Quotations of Scripture showing its necessity. (P. 93.) Illustrations. Who feel their need of it? why necessary since an atonement has been made? (P. 94.) How does Christ make intercession? Illustrations. (P. 95.) In what respects is Christ the only intercessor? How should the intercession of the ancient High Priest be regarded? the Virgin Mary and departed saints? Christians? For whom is intercession made? (P. 96.) Quotations of Scripture on the subject.

SALVATION FREE TO ALL.—(Pp. 96, 97.) Quotations of Scripture offering salvation. Is such an offer sincere? What reasons have been suggested for doubting its sincerity? Why are they false?

ELECTION.—(P. 98.) What remark is first made? What is *Election*? (P. 99.) Quotations of Scripture which teach it. Why should none complain of it? Does it prevent any from being saved? What only prevents them? In what respects is it unlike the election of a governor, etc.? (P. 100.) When was the election made? Is there any reason to suppose that it would have been different if it had been delayed ever so long? Why not? Does it compel some to choose and others to refuse salvation? Has it any influence in determining a person's choice? Is it right that it

should be so? (P. 101.) Do other things influence us? the country in which we were born? the community or family in which we live, etc.? Does God control everything? Does he ever exert bad influences? May he for wise reasons permit them to be exerted? Does he ever exert good influences on some and not on others, or cause them to be exerted? Does he thus save some and not others? Does he choose to do so? Is his choice at any time different from what it has always been? Has he a chosen people? (P. 102.) Is he, therefore, partial? What is it to be partial? Has God elected some and not others without sufficient reasons? Is he any more partial in electing than in saving some and not others? Is election any more applicable to salvation than it is to every condition of life? If a person neglects seeking his salvation on account of his election or non-election, what must he do to be consistent?

INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.—(P. 104.) What is still necessary to secure salvation? How is the change effected? Do men naturally become holy? To what is their condition compared in Ezekiel? also what change in them is referred to? (P. 105.) Of what is all true piety the fruit? Quotations of Scripture referring to the Holy Spirit, as resisted by sinners, foretold by the prophets, promised by Christ, and accompanying the preaching of the Gospel. (P. 106.) What evidences are there from time to time that his influences are still exerted? (P. 107.) How are his influences chiefly secured? Passages of Scripture quoted.

REGENERATION.—(P. 107.) What is Regeneration? Why so called? Repeat the passages quoted which refer to it. (P. 108.) How is its reality proved? What remarkable instance of it is cited? (P. 109.) Who is the Author? how evident? Are persons usually active in their regeneration? Should any one wait to be regenerated? When may persons expect to be regenerated? Illustration. (P. 110.) What usually precedes regeneration? Is conviction uniformly gradual or sudden? distressing? protracted? Is regeneration itself a gradual change? Is a person who experiences it always conscious of it at the time? Does he always know the hour or day when he first experienced it? Is the change always clear and decisive? (P. 111.) What are evidences of it? Why is it necessary? Passages of Scripture before quoted. What other considerations prove its necessity? Why are not men

naturally fitted for heaven? (P. 112.) Do they naturally become fitted as they become older? the profligate youth? the vicious? even the moral and virtuous? (P. 113.) Do any need regeneration less than Nicodemus? What is chiefly the means of regeneration? Quotations of Scripture which prove this. (P. 114.) In what respects are other means of grace useful? When are they rightly used? What are chiefly the first exercises of the regenerated? Is any one of these uniformly exercised before the others? Is one ever exercised without the others? Which is naturally first in order?

CHRISTIAN FAITH.—(P. 116.) What is Christian faith? What is the rule of faith? Is faith ever perfect in this world? Is a common belief of the Bible true faith? Is the common belief of any creed, however perfect, the same as faith? Repeat the passages of Scripture quoted which teach that none naturally have faith. (P. 117.) How are they blind? Why is their faith dead? Have many in Christian communities experienced true faith? How is their experience described in the passage of Scripture quoted? (P. 118.) Are the truths they believe generally different from what they formerly believed? In what respects is their faith different? Is it more mysterious than any other faith? Is the Gospel to be believed as other truths are? Do Christians think that their faith is essentially different from that which they formerly exercised? What should be inferred from the nature of the truths taught in the Gospel? (P. 119.) Do men naturally feel and act as though they really believed them? Could they be so unaffected if they really believed them? What particular truths do they evidently not believe? (P. 120.) With what effects is faith uniformly accompanied? Is there an essential difference between the faith of Christians and others? Is it always clearly perceptible? Is the faith of Christians apt to be very strong? Though weak, does it essentially change their course of life? (P. 121.) What examples of faith are referred to? Is such faith necessary? What passages of Scripture are quoted to prove this? Would any repent and become fitted for heaven without faith? How may it be exercised? (P. 122.) One direction? In what respects is it the gift of God to be sought by prayer? In what respects does it depend on oneself? What is particularly required? (P. 123.) What is also required? If faith is earnestly sought in connection

with a faithful discharge of known duties, will it be apt to be exercised?

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.—(P. 124.) What has been considered respecting the justification of sinners? Will all be justified by Christ? Who will be? (P. 125.) What authority is there for this? Repeat the passages of Scripture quoted. Why is faith required? Why is unbelief sinful? (P. 126.) Would justification without faith be much the same as justification without the atonement? How does faith prepare one for justification?

TRUST IN GOD.—(P. 127.) What is closely allied to faith? What is the difference in this respect between Christians and others? in temporal things? with reference to their salvation?

LOVE TO GOD.—(P. 128.) What did Christ say to the Jews concerning the love of God in them? Did they think otherwise? Do men generally think they love God? Do they really love him? How is true love produced? Quotations of Scripture. What is pure love? the opposite of what? Is it ever perfect on earth? What different forms does it assume? how expressed? (P. 129.) Are Christians always conscious of love to God? May they have evidence of it without feeling it at the time? in what ways? (P. 130.) How does love to God affect Christians in respect to others? Is their love always fervent? Is it ever extinguished? Do they need to cherish it?

REPENTANCE.—(P. 131.) What is repentance towards God? How is it distinguished from repentance naturally exercised? Why is it necessary? Quotations of Scripture. (P. 132.) Is the excuse "I can't repent" valid? Why not? Is there a sense in which sinners cannot repent? Passage of Scripture quoted. Is being accustomed to sin any excuse for continuing in it? In what respects are sinners dependent on the Holy Spirit for repentance? Is it safe to neglect repentance? What are the means to be used? (P. 133.) Is a mere volition sufficient? How are the means to be used? What particular truths are fitted to lead sinners to repentance? How is faith connected with repentance? What is the language of the penitent quoted from the Bible? What is conversion? Does it always accompany repentance? What change is effected by repentance in the heart? outward life?

HUMILITY.—(P. 134.) What naturally accompanies repentance? Have holy beings reasons for it? Why, especially, should we be humble? Are sinners apt to be humble?

PRAYER.—(P. 135.) What is one of the first indications that a person has become a Christian? What example is referred to? What is the difference between the prayers of Christians and others? What is prayer? What does it include? What is the most comprehensive and beautiful form of prayer? (P. 136.) Why is prayer the duty of all? Are the prayers of the impenitent acceptable to God? How then can it be their duty to pray? Is their indisposition to pray offensive to God? Is prayer a privilege? Illustration. In what respects is it a privilege to Christians? (P. 137.) Is prayer useful? What objection to it is often urged? Can anything else change the purposes of God? If prayer is useless, are not all human efforts useless? Is not prayer the means of good as certainly as any thing else? Has God purposed to answer prayer or not? How is prayer useful to Christians apart from its efficacy? (P. 138.) Why should we believe that prayer is efficacious? in view of God? his promises quoted? (P. 138.) What are the appropriate places of prayer for individuals? why? (p. 139.) for heads of families? why? for all as social beings? why? What kind of prayer is acceptable to God?

SUBMISSION, OBEDIENCE AND CONSECRATION.—(P. 140.) In what respects are Christians submissive to God as others are not? Examples referred to. Is it often the first indication of Christian life? Explain how. (P. 141.) What instance is related? How does consecration differ from submission and obedience? Illustrations.

SANCTIFICATION.—(P. 143.) What is it? Will it be apt to follow regeneration? why? (P. 144.) What is said of its necessity? In what respects are Christians sanctified? (P. 145.) To what are they compared in the passage of Scripture quoted? What often seems to be the experience of Christians? What must be their real experience? What passages of Scripture are quoted to prove this? What are the means of sanctification? How are prayer, meditation, etc., means of it? (p. 147.) trials? What passages of Scripture are quoted with reference to afflictions? Is perfect holiness attainable on earth? In what sense is it attainable? also

not? What passages of Scripture are quoted? (P. 148.) What is said of those who claim to be perfect? Why probably does sanctification progress so slowly?

CHRISTIAN PERSEVERANCE.—(P. 149.) Will all true Christians continue such? Is it possible for them to perish in sin? Is it certain that they will persevere? What will they need? If it depended chiefly on themselves, what would be true? (P. 150.) So far as it depends on themselves, will they be apt to persevere? Will they uniformly be consistent? Do not many professing Christians fail of salvation? If so what is true of them? In what passages quoted from the Bible is the perseverance of Christians plainly taught? (P. 152.) What passage quoted seems to teach the opposite? How may it be understood? Though there are tares among the wheat, does wheat ever become tares? Passages of Scripture quoted. Does this truth encourage Christians to neglect making efforts? Why not? Does it encourage them to be faithful? How?

CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES.—(P. 154.) What special privileges have Christians? What passages of Scripture prove that they are forgiven? Why is this a great privilege? (P. 156.) What passages of Scripture speak of their adoption? In what respects is this a privilege? What passages of Scripture refer to their communion with God? (P. 157.) Do Christians enjoy communion one with another? how? (P. 158.) What passages of Scripture speak of Christians as heirs of heaven? Why is this a privilege?

THE CHURCH.—(P. 158.) What does the word mean? What is the church? a church? Were churches at first regularly organized? How did they become organized? What officers were appointed? (P. 159.) Is any particular form of organization plainly required? What is essential?

BAPTISM.—(P. 159.) What is baptism? Is it a duty? Why? Is it efficacious in itself? Is it useful? How? What modes are used? Is it unquestionable which mode is Scriptural? Which did John the Baptist probably use? Which, Christ's disciples? In accordance with what Jewish custom were these two modes? Was John's baptism the same as Christian baptism? What passage of Scripture proves them different? What instances seem to show that sprinkling was the only mode of Christian baptism at

first? (P. 161.) Who are proper subjects of baptism? What objection is there to infant baptism? How answered? What are the reasons for it? What instances related in the Scriptures favor infant baptism? What should be inferred from the history of baptism? (P. 163.) What is the relation of baptized children to the church? How does God regard them? reasons? Are they benefited? How?

THE LORD'S SUPPER.—(P. 164.) What is it? Why observed? Is it fitted for such a purpose? In what respects should Christ be remembered? (P. 165.) What is a proper observance of the ordinance?

THE SABBATH.—(P. 166.) What is it? What is the fourth commandment? What day of the week was the Sabbath at first? why changed? Is the change authorized? why? How does it appear that the Sabbath was not designed only for the Jews? Is there need of a Sabbath? What are the various reasons assigned (p. 168.) in respect to the body? mind? (p. 169.) men as moral beings? (p. 170.) religion? (P. 171.) What is a proper observance of the Sabbath? Is the guilt of neglecting it great? how does it appear?

WORSHIP.—(P. 174.) Is God apt to be worshiped where he is known? Where was Public Worship once chiefly offered? In what did it chiefly consist? What does Christian worship include? reasons? For what are churches chiefly formed? How do Christians regard it? (P. 175.) What passages of Scripture express their sentiments? What are the appropriate exercises of worship? proofs from the Scriptures? What kind of worship is acceptable to God? (P. 176.) Do those who neglect public worship, worship him in spirit? Are all sincere worshipers who observe the form? (P. 177.) Why is public worship both a duty and privilege in respect to honoring God? (p. 178.) temporal prosperity? intelligence and virtue? salvation of souls?

THE MILLENNIUM.—(P. 181.) Why so called? What is commonly understood by it? What passages of Scripture predict it? (P. 182.) Is the time certain? What are signs of its approach? (P. 183.) In what respects is it encouraging to Christians? What impression is it fitted to make in respect to the number who will be saved? (P. 185.) Remark of Prof. Stuart.

LIFE THE ONLY SEASON OF PROBATION.—(P. 186.) What passage of Scripture is quoted with reference to it? Illustrations from life itself, youth, vices and crimes. (P. 188.) Is there anything in death that will certainly alter this natural course? In what respects is life a probation? What are the reasons for considering life the only season of probation? Passages of Scripture.

DEATH.—(P. 190.) In what respects are we familiar with it? Is it a part of the penalty of sin; or a part of the curse pronounced on man? What is the sting of death? Is it dreadful in itself? why? For what is it chiefly dreadful?

IMMORTALITY.—(P. 192.) Shall we exist after death? State the arguments in order—possible—no contrary proof—analogy of nature—(p. 193.) thoughts, desires, etc.—quotations from Young and Milton—difference between us and animals—(p. 194.) minds capable of improvement—unsatisfactory results of life—(p. 195.) the justice of God—objection that the Old Testament seldom refers to it answered—Quotations from the Old Testament—(p. 196.) the New Testament—passages quoted (p. 197.) more passages quoted.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.—(P. 197.) What is it? (P. 198.) Is it a state of consciousness? Where will Christians exist?—where the impenitent? Proofs from Scripture?

THE RESURRECTION.—(P. 199.) Is it taught by reason? Is it unreasonable? Is it represented as an important truth of the Gospel? (P. 200.) What passages are quoted to teach it? (P. 201.) In what respects will the bodies raised be the same as on the earth? In what respects will the bodies of Christians be changed, as shown in the passages of Scripture quoted? (P. 202.) Is the resurrection of the body desirable? Why may it often seem otherwise? What may be inferred respecting the bodies of the wicked hereafter? passages of Scripture quoted.

THE FINAL JUDGMENT.—(P. 202.) Has any future judgment been anticipated without the Bible? (P. 203.) Repeat the passages of Scripture quoted with reference to it. Have we perfect conceptions of such a scene? Will the reality doubtless surpass the description? (P. 204.) Who will be the Judge? Who will be

judged? What two classes will there be? What will be the test of character? To whom will the judgment be most dreadful? What will be the sentences pronounced?

THE FUTURE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED.—(P. 205.) At the close of the judgment, what will take place? What penalty will be inflicted? just? dreadful? (P. 206.) Passages of Scripture referring to it. Is such language more or less figurative? If so, is its meaning less dreadful? Will not the awful reality probably surpass all conception? (P. 207.) Are expressions which seem extravagant, and which suggest unnatural and forbidding ideas, really less alarming than they would be if rightly understood? What is plainly taught respecting the punishment of the wicked—their exclusion from heaven? Passages of Scripture quoted to prove it. What then must be their condition for this reason alone?—condemnation to Hell?—what place is hell as a place of punishment? (P. 208.) What most dreadful evils are better than to be cast into hell? to lose one's soul? How will the loss of present sources of happiness affect the wicked in eternity? Illustrations. (P. 209.) What will be the character of the wicked after death? Passages of Scripture quoted. What connection is there between sin and misery? (P. 210.) Is there anything in death to prevent this—to make sinners better? Will they naturally be wicked, and consequently miserable forever? How will a consciousness of guilt affect their happiness? (P. 211.) How does it affect them in this life? How will it naturally affect them after the judgment? What companions will the wicked have in hell? (P. 212.) What should be inferred from this? How will God regard the wicked? How does he often treat them in this world? Instances. (P. 213.) What should be inferred from the resurrection of the wicked? What passage of Scripture quoted implies bodily sufferings hereafter? How long will the wicked be punished? What passages of Scripture quoted prove that their punishment will be eternal? (P. 214.) When are such words as eternal, etc., limited in their meaning? If they do not express the idea of endless punishment, do they express the idea of endless happiness? If they do not express such an idea, could any language be used that would express it? What has been the general impression received from the Bible on this subject? Is it probable that so many have mistaken its meaning and so few have discovered it? Is there reason

to believe that the general impression received from the Bible will be essentially changed? What is the principal objection against eternal punishment? Are men proper judges? Do most persons feel that it would be unjust if they should be excluded from heaven forever? Do those who feel so know it? (P. 215.) Will not endless guilt deserve endless punishment? Will not endless sin lead to endless misery, and deserve endless punishment? What is the belief of some respecting annihilation? Can this be properly considered as eternal punishment? (P. 216.) Can sinners be punished after they have ceased to exist? Is the goodness of God inconsistent with endless punishment if just? Are there not abundant proofs of his goodness though he threatens such punishment? Would he have given his Son to die for sinners if they were not exposed to endless punishment? Are there not dreadful realities in the present life? Should not these lead us to expect more dreadful realities hereafter, if we neglect the great salvation? (P. 217.) Is not the endless punishment of the wicked necessary? What would be the effect of preaching universal salvation if all should believe it? As the welfare of society requires prisons for criminals, does not the greatest good of all moral beings require the endless punishment of the wicked? Is it not enough that there is a glorious salvation for all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?

THE FUTURE HAPPINESS OF CHRISTIANS.—(P. 218.) Into what will the righteous enter after the judgment? What passage of Scripture describes them after that? What place will they inhabit? How is it represented in the Bible? Will the reality doubtless surpass our best conceptions of what such descriptions mean? How can Christians best judge of heaven? From what will their future happiness be partly derived? In this regard, why will it be much greater than in this world? (P. 219.) How will their knowledge of God increase their happiness? What is another source of happiness in heaven? Why will holiness increase their happiness? (P. 220.) What is the chief source of happiness in heaven? How will communion with God and the presence of Christ make them happy? (P. 221.) How will the society of holy beings increase their enjoyment? their employments? (p. 222.) the worship of God? the knowledge to be acquired? various kinds of knowledge? (p. 223.) doing good? (P. 224.) Does all that has

been remarked afford us more than a glimpse of heaven? What are some considerations fitted to make heaven appear still more desirable? the satisfaction afforded—endless enjoyment? Illustrate—repeat the passages of Scripture quoted.

GOD GLORIFIED.—(P. 225.) How glorified? How is his **glory** now obscured? How glorified in the Gospel? the universe?





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taken from the Building**

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